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: BY

BYRON D. ADSIT.

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# UNCLE SAM'S BAD BOYS;

OR,

## LEAVES FROM A DIARY OF

## A POST OFFICE INSPECTOR.

BY

BYRON D. ADSIT.

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# PREFACE.

DURING the summer of 1881 I was appointed chief clerk of the salary and allowance division in the Post Office Department, in Washington, by Postmaster-General James. My principal duties were to pass upon the applications for additional allowances for clerk-hire in the various post offices throughout the country. My instructions were to grant, reject or reduce on the merits of the case alone, regardless of friendship, politics or political pressure, and, as can easily be inferred, to avoid errors of judgment, such a task required a vast amount of study and an everlasting diligence, especially as the requirements of no two offices, with similar receipts, are alike.

Indeed the work of placing the several million dollars annually set apart for this purpose so that no office entitled to its share will have too much and none too little, and so that equal justice can be clearly demonstrated, is very delicate. It was then, and is now, done regardless of any system or classifications, and no person, however familiar he may be with the needs of a great and growing service, or how far removed he may be from the influence of designing strategists, can ever hope, under present methods, to reach even a feeble apology to perfection. Postmasters and the requirements of the offices, like the sands of the sea,

are constantly changing, and, therefore, the work of an efficient, observing officer in this position is never done.

Toward the close of 1882 I had become very tired of official life in Washington, as most active persons do sooner or later, and requested Postmaster-general Howe to relieve me. He appreciated the situation and asked if I would not like to be an Inspector, adding that he thought such a position would be more to my taste. I had fully determined to bid farewell forever to government service, and should have done so then only for Colonel Parker, the Chief Post-office Inspector, who finally persuaded me to join his efficient force. I was accordingly appointed an Inspector on January 1, 1883, by Mr. Howe, and, having already had a good schooling in Post-office affairs, I entered upon my duties unusually well equipped for excellent service.

Whether I misused my advantages, or allowed my energies to relax, or permitted the excellency and impartality of my work to fall short of the expectations of friends and acquaintances, is not for me to say. The record speaks for itself. I ought perhaps to state, however, that I served acceptably through the administrations of Postmaster-generals Howe, Gresham, Hatton and Vilas, retiring on February 1, 1888, after five years and one month of probably as active and thorough service as was ever rendered in the same capacity.

My duties were usually pleasant, and such as seemed well suited to my taste. The particular work to which I was generally assigned always had a

peculiar interest in it that all people like, and surely I am not the exception. There is an irresistible charm attached to the work of unraveling mystery that is acknowledged by people in all classes, and, so strongly endowed with this peculiarity are most persons, that life would be robbed of many of its pleasures were they bereft of it. No man is perfect unless the bump of investigation is full.

Days and weeks have I spent trying to fathom some mystery of great moment, and, in the end, if successful, the bare fact that I had succeeded was glory enough; and I would look back upon the time spent, and even the unpleasant features of the work, as does a child upon the pleasures of a summer holiday.

The short sketches I have hastily drawn, which will be found in the following pages, have not been produced for the purpose of illustrating any superior skill, which I know I do not possess, but simply for the pleasure of reproducing a few truthful pictures of curious people and interesting circumstances from many originals now in my possession.

The subjects were good. If the reproductions are poor, the fault is with the brush. However, should they meet with a pleasant recognition from friends, or serve to soften the monotony of a lonely hour for others, under whose charitable eyes they may chance to fall, then "Uncle Sam's Bad Boys" will not have been introduced in vain; and then the aim and ambition of the author will have been attained.

B. D. A.

NEW YORK, *May*, 1888.

# CONTENTS.


INTRODUCTION.

The Bennington Case, . . . . . 11
John Stringham's Visitors, . . . . . 27
A Lover's Revenge, . . . . . 35
The Amateur Author's Friend, . . . . . 39
The Wages of Sin, . . . . . 47
Wiley, Miss O'Connor and McAfee, . . . . . 53
Johnson and Jansen, . . . . . 67
Mrs. Stone's Money-order, . . . . . 71
Thermometors and Barometers, . . . . . 83
The Force of Habit, . . . . . 93
Blinkey Morgan and the Kid, . . . . . 99
The Perry Rubber Works, . . . . . 119
An Accomplished Thief, . . . . . 127
Jacob Snyder's Test, . . . . . 133
Professor Curtis, of Syracuse, . . . . . 137
An Awakening at Alvin, . . . . . 149
Caught with a Scrap of Paper, . . . . . 157
Van Zandt and his Wives, . . . . . 165
Black Art in Cincinnati, . . . . . 173
My Nellie's Blue Eyes, . . . . . 181
Removed by Death, . . . . . 191

# THE BENNINGTON CASE.

THERE was little that Inspector Bassett did not know about the methods of conducting a post-office. In the matter of accounts he was excelled by none and equalled by few. I used to think he was so expert that he could tell by looking at a postmaster whether or not the accounts of his office would balance. Bassett was active both in mind and body, and there was seldom a false motion or figure he would not catch instantly; and so good was his record at the Department in this respect, and in all others, that it was often remarked that nothing could escape him. The reputation had been earned, and, as I have said, it was most admirably sustained.

In his customary business style he stepped into the post-office at Bennington, Vermont, one day about noon, for the purpose of checking up the accounts of the postmaster. The postmaster's name at that particular moment was Thomas J. Bronson, to whom the Inspector introduced himself in the usual manner, and added that he had called to look over his books, inventory the stock on hand and make him a pleasant visit. Bronson, after telling Bassett that he was very glad indeed to meet him, and delighted to think he had called to look him over, suggested that, as it was so

near the dinner hour, perhaps they had better go and serve the inner man before they attempted to work the mental man ; adding, that had he known he was coming he would have told Mrs. Bronson, so that her table would have been prepared for one more than usual. The arrangement was satisfactory, and Bassett went to the hotel and Bronson to his home.

It was not long, however, before the Inspector had returned to the office, where he was chatting with the clerks, momentarily expecting Bronson. At length an hour had passed since his return, and still no sign of Bronson. Could he be sick? One of the clerks went to his residence to ascertain, and soon returned with the information that Mrs. Bronson had informed him that the postmaster ate lightly and returned to the office much quicker than usual. Where could he be?

Inquiry was made at the hotels, stores and shops, and no one had seen him. The news of his remarkable disappearance spread to every corner of the town, and every idle person joined in the search. Finally, a farmer drove in on the road leading from the south and observing the unusual activity on the streets, asked what was up, and when he was informed that Bronson could not be found, he imparted the thrilling intelligence that, at a point about two miles from Bennington, he "met two men in a carriage, behind two horses, driving like the deuce, and unless he was all-firedly mistaken one of the fellows was Tom Bronson."

This so electrified the people of Bennington that

they scarcely knew what to do or, which way to turn; and one of them told me afterward, when describing the scene, that while Bassett was quizzing the farmer in front of the hotel, he appeared dazed at what had occurred, while everybody was crowding closer to catch the conversation. There had been no such excitement in Bennington since the fall of Sumter.

Recovering slightly from his unconsciousness, the Inspector ordered the fleetest steed in town, and was soon pursuing the fleeing postmaster in hot haste. Arriving at Hoosick Junction, the nearest railroad station in that direction, Bassett learned positively that Bronson had left on a train bound eastward, which passed about half an hour or so before. Time was precious. He could be intercepted at North Adams. Bassett was at home working the telegraph, and when the operator at North Adams settled down to take the message that Bassett was furiously firing at him, he thought that old Ben Franklin himself was at the Hoosick Junction end. The train came too soon for the excited operator, and, before he could execute the command, it had gone, and with it Bronson. When the cheerless intelligence was wired back to Mr. Franklin at Hoosick Junction that the man described was not on the train, Bassett closed the key with a bang and turned towards Bennington with a heavy heart. This was his first disappointment, and, although it had occurred through no fault of his, he would rather have lost anything, everything, than Bronson.

Bronson had lived in Bennington all his life, and was now probably forty-five. He was a friend to everybody and everybody was a friend to him. No stronger illustration of this condition was ever known. His friends were everywhere, and, had he told them he was in trouble, his wants would have been quickly supplied. But he did not, neither does any one know to this day the real cause of his misfortunes.

The finances of the post-office were found to be decidedly out of tune, and when Bassett was through he could see quite plainly why Bronson had suggested dinner before business. It was also discovered by the school trustees, to whose board Bronson belonged, and for whom he had acted in the capacity of treasurer, that there was also a discrepancy in the school fund of a few thousand. When these facts became known, every man in Bennington wore the aspect of a mourner. Surprise and pity walked hand in hand.

Bassett worked assiduously and faithfully for months searching for Bronson. Both in and out of Bennington—everywhere was he hunting for clues. Frequently he thought he could place him, only to find nothing when the theory was exhausted. Yet with all his efforts and disappointments he never wearied. At length it occurred to him that if another person could be detailed to aid him—some one who was an entire stranger in Bennington and vicinity—good results might follow. I was the one selected, and, after having been told by Bassett all he knew about the case, I quietly turned up in Bennington.

Of course I could not tell you, in a short story like this, the many and interesting details of my work in Vermont. My object was to find somebody, some friend of Bronson's, who, in an unguarded moment, might drop some little word that would possibly reveal the secret of Bronson's whereabouts. It was not the work of a day or a week, but of months. No one knew my right name, and no one knew my real business. I never talked of Bronson, but I listened intently whenever his name was mentioned, and also tried to be on familiar terms with those who liked to talk about him to their associates and townspeople.

I learned quickly that only a few, if any, of his old companions actually knew where he was. His wife and child might know, though there was not the slightest evidence that they did. The mysterious hiding-place was, I sometimes feared, beyond the grave. In my intercourse with the people, however, I had settled one fact conclusively, and that was that Bronson had for years expressed a desire to live in the far west, and he had told several persons that when he did decide to leave Bennington he should settle on a ranch somewhere. Could he have followed his inclinations, and was he not now realizing the anticipations of his better days ?

One beautiful evening in the early autumn the first ray of success dawned upon a long and patient waiting. I had been told by one who knew that Bronson was alive. Who it was that told me, or how the secret came to be told, no one save Bassett and myself knows. The person who imparted the

information is to this day unconscious of it, and should he read these lines he would be unable to recall any instance or circumstance that would serve to brighten his recollection. I also learned a little more than that Bronson was alive. I ascertained beyond a question that he was actually on a sheep ranch in Colorado. I did not think it possible for me to obtain anything more specific, and, having faith that this would answer, I hastily sought an interview with Bassett, promised to meet him ten days hence in Denver, and, turning my face toward the setting sun, followed the course of the Star of the Empire.

Entering Colorado from the south-east, clad in a festive suit of corduroy, with a sombrero and Smith and Wesson attachment, I set forth among the ranches and ranchers, wool buyers and commission men, with a good photograph of Tom Bronson. Some of the journeys were long and tedious, yet, sustained by faith, which some days was a trifle faltering, I pressed on for seven days without meeting a man, woman or child who had ever seen a person that looked like Bronson, or who had ever heard of him. Partly for the purpose of rest, but chiefly for the purpose of meeting Bassett, I went to Denver, where I arrived with no information of importance to impart, except such as pertained to ranches and the sheep industry generally.

During the day in Denver we learned from an extensive wool buyer that many people from Vermont are engaged in raising sheep and wool in the vicinity

of Fort Collins and Greeley. We were also informed that it would be a very easy task to ascertain whether or not our man was in the Greeley region, as the sheriff at Greeley was an old ranchman as well as a buyer, and his business now was such that it enabled him to continue well posted on the important question of ranches, ranchmen and herders. We immediately proceeded to Greeley, and I will relate what occurred after we arrived.

In our room at the hotel we met the sheriff and the postmaster for consultation. The postmaster was confident he had seen a face that resembled Bronson's. The sheriff was equally confident that he had not, but he knew of a man, who owned a ranch, and who lived about fifteen miles to the east ward, who formerly resided somewhere in Vermont, that would know Bronson if there was such a man in this section of the State. He said if the case was his he should go straightway to this man, and, if he did not know him, he did not think it would be much use to spend more time around Greeley. We accepted the sheriff's kind advice.

Arriving at the ranch, where dwelt the man who was supposed to know it all, we obtained very little satisfaction indeed. It was the oft-repeated tale I had heard a hundred times or more. He didn't know, but he thought somebody else who lived about twenty miles north could put his finger on the very man, and, of course, we drove twenty miles farther to be informed that he never saw, heard or dreamed of such a person. He suggested that we call on a

certain physician in Greeley, who could give us "straight tips" on Vermont people in Northern Colorado. "The doctor," he said, "once resided in Vermont, where he was a very prominent man. Recently he engineered a New England dinner given in Greeley, at which there were more than two hundred guests, who at one time or another had lived somewhere in the Eastern States." "If I was looking for anybody from Vermont in this part of the country," he observed, "I should call on the doctor, for he knows where they all are." We returned to Greeley late that night and decided to see the doctor on the following morning.

The doctor informed us that while he was living in Castleton he knew Bronson well. Had not seen him in ten or twelve years, that he knew of. Had read in the papers about the trouble at Bennington, but had never seen anybody before who thought Bronson was in Colorado, much less in this section. Was very positive he was not at the New England dinner. Upon reflection he said it did occur to him that there was a stranger there who came with some one from Fort Collins, but his name was not Bronson, though possibly it may have been Bronson under another name. If it was his case he should go over to Fort Collins and hunt for the stranger who was at the dinner. We decided not to hunt for the stranger till we had first talked with every person in Greeley who had formerly resided in Vermont. We procured a list of these people from the doctor, a part of which Bassett took, and the other portion fell to me. We

were to see and talk with every one of the people named.

The first name on my list was that of a Mr. Child. He owned a comfortable little home in town and a farm just outside. I went to his house, where I met Mrs. Child and her daughter; the husband being absent, but expected back soon. Much to my surprise she told me that she used to live in Bennington; that she and her husband and their little son, who was now the village telegraph operator, moved from Bennington about fifteen years before; that they came to Greeley because in every deed given for property here there is a clause which binds and prevents the purchaser, his heirs or assigns from ever allowing a drop of liquor to be sold on the premises for any purpose, She told me she knew Mr. Bronson quite well in Bennington, and that her husband had been on intimate terms with him.

Presently Mr. Child came. He was exceedingly courteous, and every inch a gentleman, well informed.

He remembered Bronson distinctly. Saw him every day for years and sat with him in the same lodge in Bennington long, long ago. The picture did not look as Tom used to. Time had left a few wrinkles here and there; the face was, perhaps, a little fuller and the silver hairs that could be seen were not there then, yet he thought he would recognize it as Tom Bronson. He had taken the Bennington paper ever since he came west and was very familiar with all that had happened in Bennington, especially all that had ever been mentioned in print.

He did not think it could be possible that Bronson was in the vicinity of Greeley, yet, like the postmaster, the more he reflected the more and more he believed he had seen that face somewhere within a short time. Besides being very entertaining, the Child family was giving me more information than any people I had met, and, feeling that I should not hurry away, at least for manners' sake, I remained to dinner. The family and myself were enjoying a social visit, as well as a feast of good things prepared by Mrs. Child, when suddenly the lady, looking across the table at her husband, said: "Father, do you remember that at the time Mr. Carter called and spent the evening here, about six weeks ago, he related the story about a man coming to one of the ranches, owned by Currier, in which Mr. Carter has an interest, who wanted to hire out to herd sheep?"

Mr. Child did remember that Mr. Carter told a story about such a man, but his recollection as to what he said was very indistinct indeed.

"I remember," continued Mrs. Child, "that he said the man said he was from New England, and that he had come west to learn all the details about the sheep and ranch business, so that in a year or so he would be prepared to buy a ranch and follow the business on his own account. I remember also that Mr. Carter said they thought he had seen better days, and that, partially through pity, they employed him; he proved to be a valuable herder, and, at the time Mr. Carter was here, the man was still on the ranch."

I had become deeply impressed with the story of the strange man, and instantly asked where the

ranch was located, and where Mr. Carter could be seen.

"The ranch," said Mr. Child, "is about twenty seven miles from Greeley, but I think Mr. Carter can be seen at his store, which is about three blocks distant from where we are now sitting."

I could scarcely wait for dinner to be over before I asked Mr. Child if he would not be kind enough to take Bronson's picture around to the store and quietly ask Mr. Carter if he ever saw the man the picture represented. "If he answers in the affirmative," I said, "simply ask him what his name is and where he may be found. Do not tell him why you ask."

The family, as well as myself, awaited with great anxiety Mr. Carter's reply. But the suspense was brief, for, we had scarcely withdrawn from the table before Mr. Child returned in great haste, and with barely breath sufficient to say: "That's your man. His name is George Hastings, and he is now at Currier's upper ranch."

Where was Bassett? I must find him without delay and tell him the good news. Glancing up the street I saw him coming, and as he approached he asked in a happy manner if I intended to spend all of the remaining autumn and winter months with the Child family. I answered that if the length of my stay was measured by the information I had gathered here, in comparison with my success at other places, I would remain with the Child family till spring, at least.

I then proceeded to break the news to him gently. Although he had known me a long time, and had never

known me to deceive or tell a lie, it was necessary on this occasion for me to have my statements verified by every member of the Child family and some of their neighbors before he would accept them. He had been around all the forenoon with a lot of Vermonters who had never heard of Bronson, and the result was that he had become decidedly skeptical. He soon recovered, however, and we set about preparing for the trip to Currier's upper ranch.

It was about three o'clock when we got away. A pair of small horses, a two-seated light wagon, and a cheerful driver accompanied us. We expected to make the distance in about three hours when we started, but by the time we had made the first four miles it was very apparent to the anxious passengers that it would require about three days with fair winds. The horses were too small, too weak, too slow, and just a little too lazy to win golden opinions from strangers; but it should be said to their credit that the roads were sandy. The driver was the best informed man —excepting Mr. Child—that I had drawn into conversation in Colorado. Only for his ceaseless flow of wisdom, and Bassett's sweet melodies, I would have given up in despair and thrown myself overboard.

At half-past seven, the man on the forecastle announced a light ahead, and, when he informed us it was at Currier's, there was great rejoicing. You, who know how deceiving distances are in that country, will not be surprised when I tell you that we did not reach the light till nine o'clock. It shone from a small window in the only house for many miles around. It was the only beacon by which mariners

on the boundless prairie guided their frail craft at night, and, as before stated, it was Currier's. The little rude domicile was the home of the superintendent of the ranch, and it was here that the herders partook of their morning and evening meals, while their flocks were secured in the corrals near by. We drove as closely to the house as possible, without attracting attention, while Bassett stole up softly through the darkness, to get a look through the window. He returned hastily and announced: "He is there, leaning back in his chair, against the wall on the opposite side of the room, peacefully smoking."

Could it be possible that the object of our search was now within our reach? It seemed as if there must be some mistake as there had been so many times before. But no! Bassett says he is there and that he's wearing the same happy expression that he wore away with him, the first and only time he ever met him. "Come, we must go in and apprise him that the time has come for him to leave the ranch." A moment later we had entered without knocking and Bassett was standing face to face with Bronson, who appeared almost speechless with surprise.

"Bronson," said Bassett as he was reaching for a pair of handcuffs, "don't you know me, and don't you think it is about time you returned from dinner?"

"Yes," said Bronson, "I recognize you. You are the last person I could forget," and, as he raised his hands to receive the iron wristlets, he added, "and you have not looked for me with more anxiety than I have for you. I'm glad you've come, and I'll go cheerfully."

Besides those I have mentioned there were present the superintendent and his wife and two young men, who with George Hastings, as Bronson was known, were the herders. Great was their surprise at the strange proceedings, and it required no little argument to convince them that George Hastings was not Bronson's name, and that we could not be mistaken. When Bronson had assured everybody present that he was the man, and that he was willing to go, the assemblage become more cheerful, and we were invited to partake of the best the house afforded. A very hospitable supper was prepared, and highly enjoyed, while the horses were being nourished and Bronson was packing up. It was a lively night at the upper ranch, and, at about midnight, when we were ready to bid farewell to the scene forever, sympathy and tears were bestowed upon poor George Hastings as they had never been before. As was Tom Bronson a favorite in Bennington, so was George Hastings on the ranch.

The trip back to Greeley was a weary one, though more enjoyed than was the one going out. Bronson told his sad experiences since he left home, and I assure you, they were listened to with much interest. Some of them had been painful, and were further illustrations that the way of the transgressor is hard. Of late he had written to his wife once each month. He sent the letters to a friend in Denver, who forwarded them to a cousin of Bronson's residing in Madrid, N. Y., who in time would forward them to another relative in Burlington, Vermont, and this

person would send them to Mrs. Bronson, who was then in Rutland, by messenger.

His life on the ranche had been so unpleasant and distasteful that he courted relief in any form. His duties were to go out at break of day with a flock of sixteen hundred sheep, remain with them all the live-long day alone, exposed to the rays of a bright sun, unable to read or find a cooling drink or a comfortable shade. At nightfall his flocks were driven back to the corral, and, after a scanty meal, the shepherd turned in to rest on the soft side of a bench in a straw covered coop adjoining the sheep pens. And all this for something like $25 per month. Is it any wonder that more sheep-herders commit suicide than any other class of people, and is it any wonder that Tom Bronson was glad to leave?

The morning was well advanced when we had returned to Greeley. Our arrival, as well as our mission, was soon known by all the villagers, and by train time many had gathered at the station to see us off, among whom were Mr. and Mrs. Child, the doctor, the postmaster, the sheriff and the landlord. Bronson renewed the acquaintance of those who knew him in Vermont, and was introduced to many others he had never seen before. After assuring the doctor that he was not present at the New England dinner, Bronson bade them all good-bye, and soon we were steaming rapidly toward Denver.

Our journey back to Vermont was uneventful. When we arrived, the United States Court was in session in Rutland, and, without delay, at his request, Bronson was arraigned, plead guilty, and was sen-

tenced to pay a fine of $5,000 and be imprisoned for five years. When he entered the prison he told the warden that that was the first real happy moment he had seen since he left Bennington.

Having no sheep to look after in the prison, the warden made Bronson chief bookkeeper, and in that capacity he is still serving. He sent word to Bassett not long ago that his books were often inspected, and that they always balanced to a farthing.

# JOHN STRINGHAM'S VISITORS.

JERSEY CITY is a queer old town, famous for its poor streets and high taxes, yet it contains many good people, and among the best and bravest is John Stringham. John was a soldier bold in times of war, and, besides carrying upon his person the scars of many a hard-fought battle, he is the proud possessor of as honorable a record as any veteran in Hudson County. There may be more learned men than Stringham, but none who have served their country more faithfully and received less for it. Time has not dimmed his eyesight nor daunted his courage, but his wounds have slightly affected his nerves, so that no longer is his hand and aim as steady as in boyhood, when he was known as the William Tell of Jersey.

As a reward for his patriotic services to his country, at the earnest solicitation of every patriot in town, Stringham was appointed to the honorable position of night watchman in the post-office. The great building which he was to watch and protect was once the home of a wealthy gentleman, who, when he became tired of it, sold it to Uncle Sam; and inasmuch as it was erected for private and not public purposes, it contained more cellars and sub-cellars, chambers and

ante-chambers, dark hallways, huge airshafts, and mysterious recesses than are required in a well regulated post-office, and more than any one ordinary watchman, or even a Stringham, could faithfully watch, especially in the dark hours of night, and, of course, in—Jersey City.

The life of a night watchman in such a place, as the reader can fancy, is not a pleasant one, and had not Stringham's qualifications for such an important trust been so marked, he might possibly have been made postmaster instead. Thus was merit rewarded. But Stringham, renowned as he was, with an exalted estimation of his fearlessness and faithfulness, did not feel competent to watch the post-office at night alone. He felt that it was more than any able-bodied man could do, and do well, to perambulate through the dark and dismal passages, the ornamental caverns, the wine cellars and stables looking for tramps, robbers and irregularities—to say nothing about keeping up the fires. So it was that the veteran, as a matter of sheer necessity rather than a motive of safety, kept constantly with him, besides his six shooter (also a time-tried veteran), his faithful watch-dog Major.

The last night in January 1887 found the affairs of the office working satisfactorily, and when Stringham came at eight o'clock to assume his duties for the night, the remaining clerks were tying out packages of letters and singing love songs. The whole atmosphere of the place was laden with peace and contentment. Stringham usually found the affairs of the office quiet and peaceful, but on this occasion they were so hopeful and serene that when he sat

down to light his pipe and converse with Major the picture was one of happiness unalloyed. But it was the dead calm before the storm—the gentle zephyr before the cyclone.

One by one the clerks had completed their tasks and departed, while Major, who was an acknowledged enemy of idle triflers and evil doers, had been allowed to roam about in the highly enclosed yard in the rear. The last employé left at eleven o'clock, and, as was his custom, Stringham accompanied him to the door, bolted the same, turned down the lights and proceeded to the rear door to call his faithful companion. Major came quickly, and as he passed into the long hallway he crouched almost to the floor and growled as his master had never heard him before. Soothing words affectionately applied only added fury to the language and actions of the animal.

Thinking perhaps that only the bad boys had been worrying the dog through the fence, Stringham returned to the mailing room in his customary cheerfulness, humming his favorite Dixie, while Major was snarling at his feet. He had been absent from the room possibly a minute, but during that brief period unexpected visitors had noiselessly entered from some mysterious rendezvous, and when the warrior watchman proudly returned he beheld, to his horror and astonishment, five masked burglars drawn up in battle array around a mailing case.

Quick as a flash the old soldier grabbed his weapon and opened fire. Being somewhat stunned by the suddenness with which the scene had been shifted, and aided only by a dim light, the brave defender of the

government could scarcely recognize a burglar from a mail pouch, but for all that he emptied every chamber, and without hitting a burglar, so far as I could ever learn. He said afterward that he did not care particularly about killing anybody, for he had done enough of that in his time, but that he simply wanted to let them know that John Stringham was there.

They evidently quickly discovered that he was there, for scarcely before the last shot was fired, and some minutes before the smoke had cleared away, John Stringham and the dog had been bound, gagged and muzzled.

Having thus won the day and captured the enemy, a detachment of the visiting burglars was sent on a reconnoitering expedition through the building, while two slim gentlemen and two slim revolvers acted as a body guard for Stringham. On the top floor of the mansion dwelt janitor Nixon, Mrs. Nixon and a little daughter. They had retired early and were sleeping soundly when the burglars softly entered their bed chamber, quietly awoke them and directed them in whispers to get up and be tied. They reluctantly assented, and soon after, aided by the rays from a dark lantern, were securely pinioned. The once proud, but now dejected Stringham and the dog were then escorted to Nixon's room, where in the darkness they were left in charge of a clerical looking burglar, whose long gray beard was visible below his mask. He admonished his prisoners in gentle language that the penalty for a loud word or a suspicious move would be instant death.

The bold buglars, save the one on guard over the

prisoners, proceeded now to ransack the office and open the vault which contained the stamps and money. It was past midnight, and the occupants of the little chamber heard no noise, save what seemed to be the pounding on the vault below. Occasionally the venerable burglar would quietly move about the room just to let the helpless sufferers know that he was watching them.

At about two o'clock a loud report was heard and the building shook as from an earthquake. Stringham and company felt relieved, for they thought an entrance to the vault had been gained and the robbers would soon be off with their booty. Such was not the case, for it was not long before they heard the old man pacing around to see if all was well with them. Then came another long silence which was followed by another loud report. This time the prisoners thought the robbers had surely accomplished their purpose, and soon would be heard a signal for the gentlemanly guard to come down and be off. But the signal never came.

For an hour or more silence reigned supreme. Finally passing wagons were heard, and from Stringham's position he could see the gray dawn of morning breaking. He therefore concluded the trouble was over, and after no little effort he removed the gag from his mouth and ventured to ask: "Nixon, are you there?" Nixon answered as best he could. Being satisfied that they were alone, and that the coast was clear, the two men lost no time in untying themselves, when they proceeded below to view the ruins and give the alarm.

The spectacle that greeted them can better be imagined than described. The office had been sadly demolished. The walls had been battered, the floors were covered with debris, while the vaults and inside safes were completely wrecked, though their contents, aside from being badly scorched, were unharmed. Stringham says the ruins reminded him of a battle-field, after the enemy had been vanquished, except that the dead and dying were not there, though in this case the dead had likely been carried away before he arrived.

The police were promptly notified, and by eight o'clock thousands of curious people had been around to pay their respects to Stringham, who, by noon, had repeated the story so many times that he scarcely had sufficient strength to tell it always alike.

It would appear that the burglars had a more difficult task then they anticipated, or else they were frightened away, which probably was the case, for they left behind a few valuable tools. Upon leaving the office they proceeded to the ferry leading to Courtland Street, New York, and as they were waiting for a boat they were seen by Mr. Altemus, a reporter, who was on his way home. He watched them with a suspicious eye. By his aid three of the burglars were identified and sent to prison, one of whom was the old man with the gray beard, who had spent most of his life where he is now sojourning. On the trial Stringham again related the story of the robbery, to which the judge and jury listened with wrapped attention.

It is needless to add that he is still night watchman

at the post-office. May his hard-earned glory and fame never wane, and when the last bugle-call is sounded may all the good and true realize, as did the unwelcome visitors, that John Stringham is there.

## A LOVER'S REVENGE.

GEORGE WASHINGTON WORTHINGTON was a bright young, assistant postmaster in one of the extreme south-western towns in Iowa. Unfortunately he became possessed with the idea that he was born to become a noted traveler.

He looked up the celebrated and distant places in his geography that he thought he would like to visit, and then began to wonder how he would be able to raise the necessary funds for traveling expenses and sight-seeing.

He figured it out that it would cost more than he could save by the strictest economy in four or five years. He hadn't a bit of patience, but possessed lots of solid nerve; so one night after the postmaster had locked up and gone home, and after he had pretended to lock up and go home, he returned to the office, unlocked the safe, helped himself to all of the post-office funds, all of the registered letters, all of the stamps, a fine large roll of bills belonging to the post-master's wife, locked up again as though nothing had happened and immediately started on his tour.

Just one week from that day he sailed from San Francisco on the "Alameda" bound for Sydney. Of course I did not go to Sydney. It would have been

cheaper to have paid the loss; but I did go over into Missouri to Worthington's sweetheart that he had heartlessly left behind, and asked her what she proposed to do about it.

She was very angry and was thirsting for revenge, and the reason she thirsted was because she had mittened two young men with good prospects for George, and now George had slipped away from her. She would like to play detective and catch smart Mr. Worthington, and I told her that was the very proposition I was about to make to her.

In a few days she received a letter from him written in San Francisco just before he sailed, telling her to address him in Sydney, and as soon as he reached Australia he would write again.

She sent me this letter and a copy of her reply. This was kept up for a whole year or more, till finally we had him located in Liverpool, where he had arrived on a sailing vessel.

His funds had become exhausted and he was obliged to work his passage before the mast. He didn't know where luck would next take him, but he would let her know before he sailed, so there might be a letter from her awaiting him when he arrived at the end of the voyage.

Ten days later I received a note from her saying: "He sailed on the 'A. G. Ropes,' and, if wind is favorable, will arrive in New York about the 27th; don't miss him." I begged her to give herself no uneasiness and assured her I'd not miss him, for her sake, if for no other reason.

When the "Ropes" struck the dock at pier 29 East River I was there looking for the circumnaviga-

tor. Presently I saw him come down the ship's walk, and, as he was passing me, I said in a friendly manner: "Hello, George, I have a ticket for you to Des-Moines: when would you like to start?"

He smiled and simply answered, "to-night."

He couldn't quite understand why I was so opportune, but he finally concluded that one of the sailors was a detective in disguise.

## THE AMATEUR AUTHOR'S FRIEND.

JOHN WILLIAMSON, of Detroit, was as deaf as a post and as mute as a mummy, and his business was that of skinning ambitious amateur authors. The name of the firm that Williamson was the senior and junior member of was Williamson & Co. They advertised in the religious papers and magazines in the East that they were an old and thoroughly reliable firm, and that they had opened, in connection with their other extensive business, a department which would be devoted exclusively to the revision and preparation for the press of the manuscripts of those who desired to enter the literary arena and compete for fame. They had, at great expense, secured the services of some of the most famous professors and men of letters in the world, who would have sole charge of the revisions. Send for circular.

You would scarcely believe that such improbable bait would be nibbled at, and you will no doubt be surprised when I tell you that hundreds of writers with considerable intelligence and ability, not only nibbled at it, but actually swallowed it together with the hook. It was evidently a scheme intended to defraud by use of the mails, and, notwithstanding the *Free Press* had frequently alluded to it as such, no notice-

able falling off in the great volume of mail for Williamson & Co could be detected. The case was given to me and I sent for one of the circulars.

It came in the form of a small pamphlet, and the most conspicuous feature about it was the picture on the first page, which illustrated a fine four-story building apparently occupied solely by Williamson & Co., the great publishers, reviewers and revisers. On the ground floor were the busy office and consulting rooms. Through the windows on the upper floors could be distinctly seen the renowned professors and the distinguished men of letters revising manuscripts, while in front of the busy emporium of genius and wisdom were two letter-carriers approaching with arms full of communications for the firm. Messenger boys were falling over each other in their eagerness and haste to get out and in; and express wagons were loading and unloading.

Besides the suggestive picture, the little book elaborated on the wonderful success the firm was achieving in its earnest and sincere endeavors to elevate the character of American literature. It recited the beauties of the literary profession and illustrated the boundless expanse of the enchanting field in which there was always room for bright, industrious people.

It told how poor were all the well known and celebrated authors when they started in business and how wealthy they became. It portrayed the elegant ease with which stories could be written; how dignified was the labor, and how well even moderate success paid. All that was necessary for beginners to do, to understand and fully realize the truthfulness of these

statements, was to forward their productions, either poetry or prose, to Williamson & Co., who would make the necessary revisions, if desired, and sell on commission.

In order that I might see just how this wonderful scheme worked, I decided to write a story myself and send it in. There could no serious harm come from such a bold step, as I could see, so on the train going from Kalamazoo to Muskegan I wrote it. Sorry I did not make a copy. I held it two days trying to think of an appropriate name for it, and finally sent it along for the professor to name. I also wrote a short epistle to accompany it, which I signed "Henry Wadsworth Freeman," which, with the story, I forwarded to Machias, Maine, to be mailed, giving the postmaster full instructions where to send reply, if any came.

Upon reflection it occurred to me that my literary task was only half completed. I must forward another story in order that I might note the difference with which the learned reviewers treated the different productions, and, having completely exhausted myself on the nameless story, I decided to use a short one written by Washington Irving, known as "The Widow's Ordeal." After having copied it word for word as it was written, giving it the same name that Irving did, I signed it "Mrs. Stiles Pitt Armsbury," and forwarded it, with a letter to accompany it, to the postmaster at Adams, N. Y., to be mailed, at same time instructing him where to send reply, if any came.

I waited impatiently for ten days, when, finally, a very breezy letter from Williamson & Co. purporting to have been written on a type-writer, addressed to

Mr. Freeman of Machias, was duly received by me. It ran as follows:

"We beg to acknowledge the receipt of your beautiful story entitled: ————————, which is now before us. It has been carefully examined by two of our most accomplished reviewers, who agree that, considering the experience of the author, it is a production of rare merit. We do not desire to compliment you too highly, but feel compelled to state that if the high standard of this story can be maintained in your future work, as undoubtedly it can be, your name will soon be added to the bright galaxy of illustrious American authors. Some of your sentences, however, are not rounded out as gracefully as they should be, and in a few instances we have observed that you have used too many words to properly express the meaning without confusing the reader. While these are the faults of all beginners, it is in your manuscript, we are happy to say, if fault we may call it, less noticeable than in any other we have ever seen. A slight revision and a little pruning will make the story charming, and we would certainly advise you to have it done. As this is our dullest month we will perform the delicate work for you for $10, which please send soon, as these favorable terms cannot last only a short time longer. A buyer for an Eastern firm was present when your story was read. He says it will be worth about $85 after it has been properly revised. The amount received for the story will be promptly forwarded to you, less ten per cent, which we will retain

for making the sale. Trusting we may hear from you soon, and that our relations may be mutually profitable, we remain,

Your humble servants,

"WILLIAMSON & Co."

In the following mail came the letter of acknowledgment from Williamson & Co., addressed to Mrs. Armsbury, at Adams, and the only difference in the letters that could be discovered with the naked eye was, that in Mrs. Armsbury's letter, in the blank space left for the name of the story, the words, "The Widow's Ordeal," had been inserted, and the value placed upon it by "the Eastern buyer," who was present and heard it read, was named at $75 instead of $85. With these trifling exceptions the letters from Williamson & Co. were identical, and had been printed on the same form, with the places for the name of the story and the estimation of the eastern buyer left blank to be filled in with the same type.

I would have sent $10 and asked to have the story of "The Ordeal" revised, but I knew, if I did, that the profitable relations then existing between Williamson & Co. and Mrs. Armsbury would be terminated, at least so far as Mrs. Armsbury was concerned. I knew, too, that if I could once get hold of the hundreds of untouched stories then in the possession of Williamson & Co., and on which $10 each had been paid for grafting and pruning, I would be able to obtain all the additional evidence necessary, and besides, it would be cheaper. So I resolved to try.

The four-story business block that was artistically

engraved on my bewitching circular turned out to be a neat little cottage on a quiet street about a mile and a half from the City Hall. This was the home and business place of all there was of the great publishing and revising company. I rang the bell softly, and was invited in by a little girl. Presently I was joined by Williamson, and, let me assure you, I was astonished to learn that so much trouble had been caused by a man of his apparent insignificance, and, too, by one who could neither speak to me nor hear what I said when I spoke to him. Yet he was a cold-blooded villain, and I knew it. I knew he had many sins to answer for, not the least of which had been the stealing of the last dollar from many a poor woman.

Being a little rusty in the sign-language, I picked up a pad of white paper and a pencil, and commenced business, carefully putting the questions and answers in my pocket, when each slip from the pad had been filled. This investigation proved that everything that Williamson & Co. had advertised to do was false. Not a story had ever been revised or sold, and the one from Machias, much to my disappointment, he told me was used to kindle the kitchen fire that morning. Professor Williamson, as he was known in the neighborhood, was arrested, and upon examination before the commissioner was held to await the action of the court. His wife, who owned the home, went his bail, and when the case was called at the next term, Williamson was not there; but it was stated that only a few days before, the marshal had received a communication from him, written in Windsor, under one of the old letter-heads of Williamson & Co., in which he stated that Canada was good enough for him.

In my haste to get the Professor into Canada, I omitted to state that he told me that nearly all of the manuscripts sent him for revision were from women. Also that very few poems came, except in the early spring time, when some days they would seem to fly in in flocks. "The vast majority of productions that have been sent me, or, rather, that I have bothered myself about reading," he said, "have been solid, substantial, home-made prose." Some have been short and to the point, but most of them have been too long for any use. To illustrate: Three months ago I received a story from a lady in Catlettsburg, Kentucky, which contained several thousand sheets of foolscap. I sent her the usual notice that we would fix it up for $10, and, of course, she accepted and sent the ten. She meant business; and it is a fact, she has since given me more annoyance than all the other customers combined. The title of her story was 'Nancy Belle Simmons; or, The pride of Twelve Pole Valley,' and it is now on the top shelves in the pantry stored away in sections of 500 pages each. I finally wrote the lady that two of our best reviewers had died after having tackled 'Nancy Belle Simmons,' and that I wanted her to forward the amount necessary to take it away, as this establishment never in any instance bore the expense of returning manuscripts."

Shortly afterwards I wrote to the lady, asking about the fate of her "Nancy Belle," and my letter was returned by the postmaster, who had written across the face of the envelope the painful words: "Now in the asylum."

## "THE WAGES OF SIN."

THE young life of Howard Bertrand was like a beautiful poem. It knew no care, and every page was illuminated by the mellow tints of bright hope and perfect happiness. The sweet voice and simple graces of childhood still retained their tender delicacy and beauty as the boy slowly developed into the first stages of manhood. He was admired by all, and his love of song, which was strongly marked, endeared him to those whose hearts were moved by melody. At work, at play, everywhere, the same genial expressions of happiness were observed and warmly appreciated. He found music, and made souls happy with it, where sterner people could trace nothing save the cold and dreary realities of monotony. Because of these pleasing traits, which had been tempered with patience, he was made assistant postmaster at Pierre, Dakota, before he had scarcely reached his majority.

In his official position he was all that fancy had painted. He was early at his post, and faithful to his duties. The burdens of his companions were made lighter by his mirth, and even the sedate postmaster in his serious moments could scarcely withhold the

nod of approval for the sweet refrains that floated in to drown his brooding sorrows. Howard Bertrand became his ideal, and a thousand times he wished he had been as free and blithesome, instead of the cold, calculating, plodding man that he was. But the mysterious works of nature could not be changed, and he was obliged to find such happiness as he could in hard work with pleasant companions.

Howard's light heart had been pierced by Cupid's shining dart, though few outside of the post-office had become aware of it. Back in Janesville, where his early days had been spent among the flowery vales of Wisconsin, lived the girl he loved, and next to the fountain from which sprang tenderness, music, love, and life, he constantly carried her faithful picture. It may have been the tender passions of blissful devotion and adoration that awoke in him and kept alive the symphonies and cheerfulness that so strongly characterized his existence. More than likely it was so, for one Saturday night it was observed that a missive from the fair one brought the first tinge of sadness, and soon the song was hushed.

On the following Monday morning they watched and waited for him, but he did not come. He was not at home, and had not been there since the evening before. Every nook and corner was vainly searched, and even the broad Missouri was asked to give up the dead, but it did not respond. Could he have flown with the funds of the office? No. Every cent and every stamp was in its proper place. The mystery could not be solved, and the friends were appalled.

Three weeks had passed, during which no word or sign had been received from Howard Bertrand, and he had been given up as dead, when one day the postmaster received a telegram from the Department inquiring how it happened that during a certain period quite a number of money-orders for large amounts had been issued by him, mention of which had not been made in his weekly statements of orders issued. The postmaster promptly responded by saying that every money-order issued in that office since he had been postmaster had been properly reported on the weekly statement. He thought the telegram had been missent; but that evening after he had closed up, and had settled down for a little quiet meditation, he made a startling discovery.

By a careful examination of his book containing the blank money-orders, he observed that near the back of the book there was a place where the numbers of the orders, and the advices attached, did not appear consecutively, as they should. By further careful scrutiny he discovered that the binding of the book had been severed; that a set of leaves had been withdrawn, and that the book had been rebound so that the pages would not be missed. "A very clever trick indeed," said the postmaster, as he picked up the telegram to read it again.

Howard Bertrand had taken the orders from the book. He had filled them out for as large amounts as the law would allow; had stamped and signed them as was the custom; had made them payable to himself at offices in Wisconsin where he was known; had regularly filled out the letters of advice, and had

forwarded them to the postmasters at the offices on which the orders had been drawn, and had coolly followed them, and, probably, long ere this had procured the money and fled.

From the books of the auditor it was learned that the value of the orders thus falsely issued was something less than $3,000. All of the money Bertrand had secured, and still there was no trace of him after the money on the last order had been obtained. A week later, which was four weeks after he left Pierre, Metcalf heard of him in Toledo, where he had been two weeks before. He followed him to Buffalo, to Albany, to Concord, to Portland, to Calais and finally to Halifax, where it was pretty clearly established that he had sailed away on the "Circassia" to England. Our anxiety to find Bertrand was enhanced by the hope of being able to recover some of the stolen money, so that the postmaster at Pierre would not be as great a loser as he otherwise would be.

Weeks and months came and went, but still no tidings from the wanderer. There was not much that could be done. Our descriptions were well scattered, and we felt sure that somebody, some day, somewhere, would find him and report. Patiently we waited for eighteen months, when the long looked-for news came; but it came in such an unexpected form, and contained so much pathos, that it caused no rejoicing.

It was winter. For weeks on the Western plains the cold had been very severe, and the icy hand of death had touched every living thing that had at-

tempted to withstand its rigors unprotected. One bright morning, following a night of almost unprecedented bitterness, a party of track repairers on the Union Pacific, about eighteen miles west of Omaha, discovered the lifeless body of a young man, lying beside the iron pathway. Tenderly they raised it and searched for marks of identification. They found no bruises or signs of violence, only a few small pieces of silver in one of the pockets, and nothing else, save the photograph of a beautiful girl, bearing upon it the imprint of an artist in Janesville, Wisconsin.

"So sleeps the pride of former days,
So glory's thrill is o'er,
And hearts that once beat high for praise,
Now feel that pulse no more."

## WILEY, MISS O'CONNOR, AND McAFEE.

LAWRENCE WILEY was a man of probably thirty-two or thirty-three years, and he resided in Chicago. He was handsome and vain, and had never earned an honest dollar in his life. Though born in humble circumstances, he was reared in idleness, and had learned early in life to look upon labor suspiciously. Nature had generously endowed him with faculties and energies that most poor men would be happy to possess, and, had he exercised them as most ambitious men would, and as it was probably intended that he should, he would not have been the Lawrence Wiley of whom I write.

His ambition and chief aim in life seemed to be to make money without work, and to appear like one who had more than he could spend. So proudly did he step, so genteel was his dress, and so business-like and substantial was his mien, that the traveler from New Zealand who saw him pass would naturally conclude: "That man owns it all. From the lake to Western Avenue; from Lincoln Park to Kensington—all is his."

Men who get along in this fashion sometimes do well for a time, but invariably they become bolder with their schemes, and in the end are swallowed up

in prisons. Wiley, although one of the shrewdest and most accomplished of his class, was no exception to the rule. For a couple of years or more his plans never seriously miscarried, though during that eventful period the strong arm of Justice was constantly reaching out for him; but never was it long enough, or strong enough to bring him in.

The particular schemes to which Wiley was happily wedded, were those in the nature of lotteries; and with them he would fleece the unsuspecting countryman painfully, yet beautifully. So smoothly was it done that not one person in a hundred ever realized that he had been injured, and, therefore, he would be just as anxious to try again, when the tempting opportunity was offered; and, you may rest assured, the opportunities were offered frequently.

But even with all his cunning and acuteness, Wiley had never devised a plan to operate without using the mails. He could not advise his customers of his plans to make them rich, except by what appeared in each case to be a personal letter sent through the mails. Thus the mails aided him to rob the weak and unwary, all of which was unlawful, and no one knew it better than Lawrence Wiley.

In the West, as in the East, there is an organization known as the Society for the Prevention of Vice, and the western agent of this society is Mr. R. W. McAfee, of St. Louis—an upright, honorable gentleman. It is McAfee's particular business to prevent, if possible, just such unlawful work as Wiley was engaged in.

Wiley also knew this, and if there was any man in the world that he had a profound contempt for, it

was McAfee. I do not think McAfee entertained any ill feeling toward him, but it was apparent to everybody that McAfee would be willing to sacrifice almost anything he possessed if he could make a sure case against the scheming Wiley.

Time and again had he failed, and in each instance had he been obliged to find consolation in the simple operation of having the lottery mail stopped. It would not be long, however, before it would commence coming again; this time addressed to another alias, and always to a new number and another street. It would be the same scheme, apparently being worked by others. The rooms to which this mail would be addressed were invariably rented by some person other than Wiley, and one with whom the landlord was unacquainted.

A lady clerk would be engaged by another stranger, and her time would usually be occupied in copying names out of directories and telling callers that "Mr. So-and-so was out looking at a piece of real estate on the west side, and no knowing when he would return." She was there solely for the purpose of receiving the mail and deceiving the people. When the mail came it would be forwarded by messenger to Wiley, who never came to the rooms either by day or night. The messenger was so well trained that no person could follow him, and thus the identity of the mail would be lost.

It was finally agreed that when suspicious mail commenced coming, a card should be sent to the office of the firm addressed inviting the persons interested to call at the post-office and be identified. This proved

a hard blow to Wiley. Rather than show his hand he would order the young lady dismissed and the key returned to the janitor. The experiments cost more than he could make out of them, and he had now to turn to other cities or to other schemes.

It was not long after this, however, before it was discovered that a firm styled Barber & Co., of Wisconsin Street, Milwaukee, were sending out the most alluring lottery circular-letter ever seen. It represented that Barber & Co. were the confidential agents of the Louisiana Lottery Company of New Orleans; that this company having grown rich and prosperous by legitimate business, had decided to offer to the public a broad and comprehensive plan for dividing their surplus among their old patrons; a plan more generous than had ever before been offered by any lottery on earth, and one, which, if embraced during the coming thirty days, would bring wealth, luxury and splendor to each participant. Single tickets only would be sold in the grand surplus series, and each ticket would cost $5. The drawing would take place in New Orleans on the 15th of the following month. If a ticket sold by Barber & Co. failed to draw a prize on this occasion, the holder thereof would be furnished with another ticket free for the next drawing, and so on during each month till every ticket had drawn a prize. These tickets could be purchased only of Barber & Co., who were the only authorized agents for the great North-west. Then followed a list of the names of persons in this country who have had wealth and fame thrust upon them by this benevolent lottery company.

Strange as it may seem—to a person who never bought a lottery ticket—the Milwaukee mails were soon so heavy that the postmaster threatened to wire the department, asking for additional help to properly handle the increasing business. The post-office was completely snowed under with letters for Barber & Co., a firm that had recently opened a real estate office not two blocks away. Had the boom struck Milwaukee, or was it a dream?

It was simply a stupendous scheme, and who save Wiley could have thought of it? and who but Wiley would have had the nerve to put it in operation? It was a new one, but it possessed a few earmarks of the old offender. McAfee was wild to hunt for Barber & Co., and I was detailed to go along and see that they did not kill him, or, if they did, to be a witness.

Arriving in Milwaukee, we sought the landlord of the building in which Barber & Co. had opened a real estate office on the second floor. He informed us that the person to whom he had rented the rooms, said, when he made the arrangement that he was the company portion of the firm—a sort of a silent partner. He was a stranger with red hair and red whiskers, and he also said he had business in St. Paul and would not be in Milwaukee much to assist Mr. Barber. The letter-carriers told us they never saw anyone around the rooms except a young lady, who was known to them as Miss Katie O'Connor, to whom all the mail was delivered.

Barber & Co. had advertised their real estate office in the daily papers, and so we concluded that it would be wise to call and see if we could not transact some

business with them. I was to do the calling, and, as I entered, I found Miss O'Connor very busily engaged on a type-writer. The main room was rather small, with a still smaller one in connection, and was furnished plainly with chairs, two desks, a sofa and several pictures. I asked for Mr. Barber, and was politely informed that he was out at present—an observation I had already made.

I told the young woman that I owned a valuable lot in the 15th ward and had called to see Mr. Barber, thinking possibly he might find a customer for me, at the same time asking her if she thought he would be in soon. It was her impression that he would not return to the office again that day, as he had gone to Oconomowoc with a gentleman to look at a hotel property that was on the market; but said if I would be kind enough to leave my card she would hand it to him on his return and tell him what I had told her, and if he could be of service to me he would call around and see me. I gave her the name of the first citizen I could think of, and withdrew to confer with McAfee.

There was now no longer any doubt but that Barber was Wiley, although we could not learn that any stranger had been seen around the premises who resembled him. The man who rented the rooms could surely not have been Wiley, who has dark hair and a smooth face.

But this fact seemed the strongest in the case against him. We also believed that Miss O'Connor was from Chicago, and, if so, of course she was a professional real estate clerk, as well as quite expert

in the other business. That being the case, it would be no use trying to obtain information from her, and so we decided that inasmuch as she was very bright and intelligent, and evidently thoroughly understood what Wiley was engaged in, that if we could give her just a little cause to be suspicious she would take the hint and fly quickly to her employer. We could follow and if we found Wiley, or anyone else, make an arrest and take our chances afterward of being able to connect the person with the lottery scheme.

This was agreed to and McAfee went to procure a warrant for Barber, while I returned to the real estate office. Entering I found the affable Miss O'Connor still hard at work on the type-writer. I apologized for returning so soon by saying I had called again to inquire if she knew of any young lady out of employment who was a competent stenographer as well as a fair operator on the type-writer. She answered pleasantly that she did not.

In the course of a general conversation on the subject she informed me that she had learned to use the type-writer since she left school, merely as a pastime; that she did not have to work, but preferred to have her time occupied, rather than spend it in idleness, as did most young ladies in her circumstances. Her father, she said, was wealthy, and was a man who had worked for all he had, and was one who believed that honest labor was essential to happiness, and so, of course, he did not object when his daughter expressed a willingness to engage in something light and profitable. She told me she secured this position not through the kind proffers of influential friends, but by

answering an advertisement in person, just as a poor girl would do.

Then she showed me the advertisement in the *Sentinel* of the week before, and remarked, with just a little sarcasm, that she thought my better way to secure a stenographer would be to advertise for one. As I was about leaving I said: "Please do not consider me rude or inquisitive, but do you know where Mr. Barber resided before he came to Milwaukee?"

Affecting no emotion she answered that she had understood from Mrs. Barber, who frequently calls at the office, that they formerly resided in Baltimore. I thanked her, and as I walked out I imagined I heard the little adventuress asking herself: "Why did that gentleman ask me if I knew where Mr. Barber formerly resided?"

Just as I was leaving the building I met the faithful carrier who was making his last trip for the day. I hastened to find McAfee, for I felt confident Miss O'Connor would soon be off; and my expectations were quickly realized, for soon the accomplished maiden came tripping gayly along, looking as sweet and innocent as the one she had pictured to me only a few moments before. Was it possible that I was wrong and the young lady had told the truth?

It is true that had I not known positively, or rather, beyond a reasonable doubt, that Miss O'Connor had spoken falsely, I might have been influenced by her assumed innocence, as others likely had been who had called on Barber and Co. for information. But I knew what others did not. Whether or not she was in full confidence with the head of the firm she

certainly must know that Barber & Co. were not in the real estate business, and that some other business was being transacted that was not honorable, to say the least.

Upon leaving the office Miss O'Connor proceeded directly to the Axtel House, where she hastily partook of her dinner and left by a side door, thereby slipping away from any person who might possibly have been shadowing her. Then another consultation followed, in which one of the clerks of the hotel was taken into our confidence. He gave the information that the young woman came to the house with a very nicely appearing man, about ten days before; that they were assigned adjoining rooms on the floor above the office, and that they still occupied the rooms.

They registered from St. Paul, and very little was seen of the man, though the young lady was quite regular at her meals. McAfee stepped to the desk to examine the register on the date named, and when his eye caught the names of Thomas Barber and Miss O'Connor he instantly recognized the handwriting, and it was Wiley's.

Our theory was, then, that Wiley had another place in the city where Miss O'Connor met him for consultation, to which place she had now gone to tell him all that had transpired. Sometime during the night they would probably quietly return and enter the hotel unobserved. In order that we might be on hand when Wiley came, we engaged the rooms directly across the hall from his, and arranged with the night

clerk to come and notify us as soon as he had entered the hotel.

Fearing the clerk might forget us, we took turns watching, and it was just four o'clock in the morning when the man of many aliases entered. He was alone. We hastily put our armors on and sallied forth to meet the enemy. Fortunately he had left the door of his room slightly ajar, through which we sprang quickly, fearing he might make his exit through a window to the roof, if we stopped to parley.

No bull was ever more enraged at the sight of a red flag than was Wiley at the sight of McAfee. He jumped at him furiously and would have carved him up and thrown the pieces into the murky river that lazily flowed beneath the window, had not a stranger been present for the sole purpose of protection.

Wiley flashed his revolver in the dim light of the early morning and swore he would shoot the first man who was audacious enough to lay a hand on him. Of course he was addressing McAfee, and I glanced toward my companion to see if I could detect any sign of fear or weakness, and I remember that my conclusions were that, under the trying circumstances, he appeared uncommonly bold and resolute.

I knew he would rather meet death then and there than suffer inglorious defeat. Wiley excitedly informed McAfee that probably he would never have a better opportunity to kill him, and he believed he would do it now. It looked to me like business, and, jumping suddenly, I grabbed the frantic man,

wrenched the deadly weapon from his iron grasp and shoved him into the hall.

There I attempted to inform him that I was an officer of this great and glorious government, and that I had a warrant for his arrest. In clear and deafening tones he demanded to see the warrant. McAfee produced it; and when Wiley discovered that it called for a man named Barber he sank back on his dignity and madly defied us. I told him that it mattered not what name was in a warrant if the officer serving it knew that the person he was serving it on was the man wanted. "While this warrant litterally calls for Barber, it means Wiley as well, and as you are both Barber and Wiley, so to speak, we will kill two birds at one shot."

By this time every person in the hotel had been aroused by the harangue and had turned out, just as they awoke, to ascertain where the fire was. The clerk had sent in a double police alarm, and it is doubtful if the Axtel House was ever before so completely upset.

We held Wiley at bay till four policemen appeared on the scene and proceeded to escort the prisoner to the nearest station house. An examination of his effects at the hotel satisfied us beyond question that we had made no mistake.

Soon afterward it was learned that Miss O'Connor, having heard of Wiley's misfortune, had escaped on an early train to Chicago. A telegram, however, reached Chicago ahead of her, and by noon both Mr. Lawrence Wiley and Miss Katie O'Connor were preparing for dinner at the Milwaukee county jail.

One of the happiest moments in McAfee's stormy career was when he had written a telegram to the president of his society, which briefly said :

"We have arrested Wiley and have evidence sufficient to convict. How are the mighty fallen ! "

The next happiest moment in his life was when he received an answer from the appreciative president, which read as follows :

"We all join in warmest congratulations on your brilliant success. Your salary will be increased at the next meeting."

Did the officers of the society for which I had risked my life send me any congratulatory telegrams, or show appreciation by proposing to increase my pay ?

The next term of the United States Court was to be held in Oshkosh, and on the appointed day the case against Wiley and O'Connor was called. The prosecution showed how extensively Barber & Co. had swindled the people in distant states and territories ; that the Louisiana Company had never authorized any body to make such propositions as Barber & Co. had made ; and further, that the lottery company had never heard of Barber & Co. until some one sent them one of the Barber circulars.

The proprietor of the hotel swore that the persons came to his house on a certain day and registered as Barber and O'Connor. McAfee testified that the key which he held in his hand, and which was a key to the door of Barber & Co.'s real estate office in Milwaukee, was found on a ring marked Lawrence Wiley, in the trunk of the principal defendant, at his hotel ; that the circular marked "Exhibit A.," which

was one of Barber & Co.'s, was taken out of the same defendant's trunk with many hundreds of a similar kind; and that the red wig and the pair of red false whiskers, which he held in his other hand, were also found in the same defendant's trunk.

The proprietor of the building in which the real estate office was located testified to the astonishing fact that the person to whom he rented the rooms wore, on the occasion when the rooms were rented, the red wig and red whiskers exhibited by the last witness. This was a clincher and the District Attorney rested.

The defense devoted its feeble energies to abuse of McAfee, the Louisiana Lottery Company, and heartless government officers, without making much of a showing. The court read the law to the jury and charged them firmly. They were out scarcely fifteen minutes, when they returned with a verdict of guilty for Wiley, and one of acquittal for Miss O'Connor; all of which was satisfactory to the court, to the able counsel, to the large and appreciation audience, and—to McAfee.

When the judge began his solemn and impressive admonitions to the prisoner there was a painful silence in the court, and Miss O'Connor sobbed pitifully.

But when the sentence came and the marshal was directed to tenderly gather together all there was left of the once haughty Lawrence Wiley, and convey it to Waupun for safe-keeping, Miss O'Connor, whose right name was Florence O'Keef, wiped her weeping

eyes and remarked that she hoped her life would be spared long enough to enable her to square accounts with the agent for the Society for the Prevention of Vice.

## JOHNSON AND JANSEN.

JOHNSON and Jansen both hailed from Norway. Johnson was a sailor, and Jansen was nothing in particular. Some way, while at sea, Jansen became intimately acquainted with Johnson, though Johnson did not learn much about Jansen, and did not try.

Of course Jansen learned Mrs. Johnson's address in Boston, where she was working for good wages, which she took good care of, together with the earnings of her husband, which he always sent to her whenever he arrived in any port. They were thrifty people, and were wisely looking ahead to the time when perhaps toil would become too irksome for Mrs. Johnson, and the sea too rough for Mr. Johnson.

Jansen, who fancied it was easier to steal than work, thought he saw a good opportunity to obtain some of the wealth the prudent Johnsons had laid away; so he came to New York and wrote to Mrs. Johnson representing that he was Johnson, and wrote just as Johnson would have written, had he landed in New York sick, sometime before pay-day.

He was not so very sick; simply was not feeling quite well enough to work, and he wanted $25 to help him along till he obtained his pay. Mrs. John-

son, like any true wife who was the custodian of the family exchequer, sent the money by registered letter, accompanied by expressions of the deepest sympathy for her husband.

Jansen received it without difficulty, and smiled like a villain. If you are unacquainted with the smile of a villain, try and imagine how Jansen looked when he received Mrs. Johnson's letter, and found the money.

It had worked once, and why wouldn't it work again and possibly a gain? He thought it would. In a couple of days he wrote another letter full of apologies, asking for $25 more. When Mrs. Johnson received this letter she thought it sounded unlike her husband to write for money again so soon; still she could not discover anything wrong about the character of the writing, or the contents of the request.

She pondered over the matter some time, and simply because she had never known Mr. Johnson to do business that way, she became just a little suspicious. Fearing a mistake if she refused, she sent the money, the same as before, and, as a precautionary expedient, at the same time wrote to the postmaster in New York, telling him of her vague suspicions, also enclosing a photograph of her husband.

If the Mr. Johnson, to whom she had sent the money, resembled the picture, then it was her desire to have the letter delivered and nothing said; otherwise withhold the letter and return it to her. Well, Jansen resembled the picture except that his face was a trifle too thin, which was easily accounted for by the fact that he had been sick; and he really had less

trouble obtaining this letter than he did the other, while his smile was even more bland than before.

Emboldened by his wonderful success, he foolishly resolved to try again. This time he waited a week, when he made the third request for the customary twenty-five. On this occasion Mrs. Johnson, who by this time knew her business tolerably well, immediately responded by enclosing blank paper in her letter. She then notified the postmaster in New York that the so-called Johnson was a swindler, and requested that he be arrested when he called for the registered letter she had just sent him.

Jansen, the villain, was duly arrested, when he played the part of Johnson so well that every one was perfectly satisfied that he was the real character. He even asked us to send for Mrs. Johnson, his wife, and, just to convince the lady that she had been the cause of her husband's cruel treatment, she was asked to come.

Unknown to Jansen she came; and when she quietly entered the room where the prisoner was conversing with others, Jansen looked up, but did not recognize her, and it is scarcely necessary to add that Mrs. Johnson had never seen Jansen before—and never wanted to again.

## MRS. STONE'S MONEY-ORDER.

ONE day a well dressed lady, purporting to be Mrs. Richard Stone, called at the money-order division of the New York office and asked for the money on an order for £10, which had been issued in Lowestoft, England, payable to the order of Richard Stone. The order presented on this occasion had apparently been properly endorsed by Richard Stone, who had made it payable to his wife.

The only precaution necessary on the part of the examiners and paying clerks was, therefore, simply to satisfy themselves that the lady was Mrs. Richard Stone, the rightful payee. There being no person present to identify her she exhibited several letters addressed to herself and her husband, and the identical letter from Lowestoft, which contained the money-order.

She told them where her husband was employed, and gave the name and number of the street of their residence. It seemed clear enough, and the money was paid.

Just such transactions as this occur a hundred times a day, and it cannot be expected that the clerks can remember very much about any particular transaction many hours after it occurs. Three weeks later, when

another lady called, also purporting to be Mrs. Richard Stone, to make inquiries about a money-order for £10 sent to her husband from Lowestoft, England, there was not very much to say except that the order had been paid.

This lady also produced a letter from her husband's sister in Lowestoft, saying that on a certain day she sent a money-order for the amount named; that she had just received his last letter, and there being nothing said about having received the order, she wrote to ascertain if the order had not been received.

Mrs. Stone, the second, stated that this was the first that her husband, or herself, had known of the existence of such an order, and she had called to see what could be done about it. If it had been paid, surely somebody must be responsible for the wrong payment.

It is the custom, where a wrong payment can be established, for the postmaster or the clerk making the mistake, to make the amount good to the right payee. Mrs. Stone's case was accordingly referred to me for adjustment.

Her story was told in such a simple manner that no one who heard it could doubt her word. But it was possible that she had received the money, and had forgotten about the transaction.

When the order was paid the lady who received the money was questioned by two examiners, both of whom were satisfied that she was the person to whom the order should be paid. The same two examiners talked with Mrs. Stone, the second, and one of them thought she was the lady to whom the money

was paid, while the other could distinguish very little similarity and felt confident the first Mrs. Stone was not the second Mrs. Stone.

On the following day Richard Stone himself called to talk the matter over and give me some points. He suspected a young woman named Nellie Mason, who had been in the habit of calling on his wife, who was an old friend of hers, and who resembled her very much.

Mr. and Mrs. Stone resided in Twenty-eighth Street at this time, but at the time the missing letter must have arrived in New York they were living in a flat in Twenty-seventh Street. The mail for the occupants of this flat was left by the carrier on a table in the lower hall, and any person so inclined could have picked up the lost letter.

He had several samples of Nellie Mason's writing in the form of letters that Mrs. Stone had received from her from time to time, and they corresponded with the endorsements on the order.

The case was now becoming interesting, and, at Stone's request, I consented to call at his residence the next afternoon to talk with Mrs. Stone about Miss Mason.

Richard Stone was a young man of probably thirty-two, and an Englishman. His dress and appearance were faultless, while his conversation indicated that he was well educated. He had been in this country scarcely fifteen months, yet he was holding a confidential position in one of the largest corporations in the city, where he was held in the highest esteem, and where he was complimented alike for his rare

abilities and gentlemanly deportment. Indeed, every person interested was delighted with him, and they had all often wondered at their good fortune in securing the services of such a preëminently competent man.

Mrs. Stone was somewhat younger than her husband, and was of fair size and fine form. "Her brow was like the snowdrift; her voice was low and sweet," and nature had also generously endowed her with an abundance of the most beautiful red hair that ever gladdened the heart of man with its warm and genial rays. She was an American, and had been married to Mr. Stone only a few months.

Mr. and Mrs. Stone were both at home when I called. I was as warmly greeted as though I had been a welcome messenger of peace from a mortal enemy. Mrs. Stone had hardly recovered from a terrible scare she had received the previous evening, and the household affairs had scarcely resumed their wonted cheerfulness and repose.

"Was it a burglar?" "No, worse than burglars!" And having never learned that anything brought more terror to womankind than the soft step of the artful burglar, I listened with bated breath to the interesting story of the husband.

It was his custom to arrive home each afternoon about six o'clock, where the bright smiles of Mrs. Stone had never, till yesterday, failed to bathe him in the warm and tender adorations of perennial affection. Last evening when he entered at the usual hour the house was still and dark, and the bright face of his loved one greeted him not.

A strange man approached him, in as great surprise as if the dead had come to life, and bade him be calm and composed, and said he thought Mrs. Stone would soon recover consciousness; that somebody had sent her word that her husband had been killed, and the shock was too great and too sudden for her to bear. A telegram from a down-town office, which brought the dreadful intelligence, lay upon the table, and it was signed, simply "N. M."

From this circumstance alone it was painfully evident that Nellie Mason was a bad and designing individual. Mrs. Stone was sweetly reclining on a richly-covered couch, and her faithful husband was lovingly administering to her every little want. The lady, like tender blades of grass that have been watered by a passing storm, seemed more beautiful than before her severe trial. Under the warm sunshine of sympathy and love, her many pleasing charms shone like diamonds in the diadem of royalty.

Seating myself within easy hearing distance of the fair Mrs. Stone, she began the enchanting tale about Nellie Mason, the sorceress. It was as follows:

"My maiden name was Francis West. My parents died when I was young, and I went to live with an aunt in Peekskill on the Hudson. There I received every attention that a dear relative could bestow upon the young offspring of a deceased sister. There I attended school, and in that school I first met Nellie Mason. She was about my age, and, like myself, was living with an aunt, though she was not an orphan.

"Pardon me when I tell you that I was an attractive young miss in those days. Young girls know as well

as older ones that good looks, grace, and fine dress are envious attractions. No one understood this more perfectly than Nellie Mason.

"At school, at church, at parties, and everywhere, she seemed to grieve at my good fortune. I always treated her kindly, for I had been taught the charm of charity, yet, with all, it seemed that sometimes I could no longer bear the unpleasant feeling that steals over a person when it is known that another is constantly trying to imitate, and perhaps injure you.

"It is true, she looked like me in several particulars. That is, Nature had made her something like me, and the points of difference she was ceaselessly attempting to assimilate. There was only one marked difference, but that was easily changed. Her hair was brown; now it is exactly like mine. We were in the same classes and the same social circles.

"She tried to imitate my voice, my actions, and, so perfectly did she imitate my writing, that no person can tell which is the genuine and which the false. Whenever I procured a new gown, Nellie was as certain to have one like it as she was to live. She would even squeeze her foot into a two-and-a-half shoe, and was dying to imitate my smile. Poor thing, how I did worry her! But what bothered her more than anything else, was her inability in every instance to associate with the same particular persons that I did.

"In Peekskill, as I suppose it is in most places of its size, the young men are quite attentive to the young ladies. While my aunt was very solicitous about my company, I managed to receive about as much attention as the other girls, and, do you know, I never

had a beau in my life that Nellie did not try to get away from me.

"Finally, just to bother her, I would tell the young men that if they paid Miss Mason any attention I would have nothing whatever to do with them; that I would cut them squarely. Well, one young fellow, whom I had thus admonished, thought it would be smart to tell the young lady what I had said, and since that day Nellie Mason has not been trying so much to imitate as she evidently has to injure me.

"Soon after I married Richard and came to New York to live, Nellie went home to Lewiston, Maine; and after she had been there a while she wrote me a letter in which she said she had married. I have her letter now. She did not remain long in Lewiston, for the next thing I heard of her she was here in New York.

"She called on me and said she was living with a Mrs. Gilbert, in East Thirteenth Street; that she and her husband had quarreled, and that she had resolved to make her own living, and was then at work in an Insurance office. It is needless for me to say that I did not return the call, but I presume it would have been better for me if I had.

"One evening, about half-past five, about three weeks before we left our old apartments, one of Mr. Stone's most intimate friends called. There was nothing particularly singular or remarkable about the call, for the gentleman often came with Richard and made real homelike visits. He had not been in the house long on this occasion before he said he was delighted to receive my kind letter. Of course, not knowing

what he referred to, I promptly demanded an explanation, when he took from his pocket a neat little letter apparently written by me and signed 'Frances,' requesting him to call at 5:30 that day, as I wanted to see him particularly. Did you ever hear the like of that?

"Well, to make matters still more embarrassing, presentlyin walks Richard with another letter written in a scrawling anonymous hand, in which he was advised to be home by 5:45 as he would find company. The next thing we heard was the money-order affair, and the next was the telegram announcing Mr. Stone's death last night, which nearly killed me; and who knows what will be next?"

The only appropriate words I could command, after Mrs. Stone had finished, were: "Wonderful woman!" I assure you I was unable to state just then whether I referred to Mrs. Stone or Nellie Mason. If the strange story was true, Nellie Mason was wonderfully remarkable. If it was untrue, then Mrs. Richard Stone was the most remarkable character I had ever met. I promised to call again in a day or so, and hastily withdrew to strengthen or unravel the nicely-woven fabric Mrs. Stone had offered.

Richard Stone had acted so much in sympathy with his beautiful wife, that I began to think if she was wrong, Richard could not be right himself; so I determined to know more about him. I called upon the chief officer of the company where he was employed, and confidentially asked him what he knew about Stone.

He told me that Stone came from England with

the best kind of written recommendations from several of the oldest established business houses in London and Norwich; and further, that he had been warmly recommended by the Young Men's Association, in New York to which he had been splendidly introduced, and in whom the officers of the association still retained a deep interest. He was a first-rate business man, and he thought there could be no more question about his character than there was about his own.

I told him there were some decidedly singular features about my case; but, of course, they could possibly all be cleared up without leaving a blemish on Stone's character. I thought, under all the circumstances, it would be best to have a frank talk about the matter, and if he still thought Stone was honest and honorable we would say no more about it.

He was so impressed with the story that he said they could not afford to retain him, valuable as he was, if there was a probability that he was not what he should be. But to be sure that they were making no mistake, they would commence the investigation in England, and at once. That day a cablegram was forwarded to an agent in London, who was given full instructions what to do and how to send his report.

Having disposed of Mr. Stone for a brief period I devoted a day or two to investigating Mrs. Stone and Nellie Mason, and I know the result will be read with interest. There was no record at Peekskill that showed that either of the ladies ever resided there. There was no record in Lewiston of Nellie Mason's father or Nellie Mason. She had never lived at Mrs.

Gilbert's in East Thirteenth Street, but Miss Frances West had, and, by the loquacious landlady, who knew about all there was in this world worth knowing, and who had not kept a boarding house all these years for nothing, I was advised to investigate Miss West very sharply indeed. When I asked Mrs. Gilbert if she had not heard of Miss West's marriage, she said: "Tut, tut, I do not believe one word of it."

I was not long in determining beyond a doubt that Mrs. Stone sent the telegram to herself, announcing her husband's death. She had ingeniously sent it to her own number in West Twenty-seventh Street, knowing that the messenger, when he found no such person on the west side, would surely cross to East Twenty-seventh, and would not reach the last number till after she had arrived home. While I was looking up the telegram I heard that a detective was looking up a Miss Nellie Mason from Peekskill, who, it was supposed, had purloined a beautiful stem-winding, full jeweled Elgin, No. 10,427, from a gentleman from Boston, who had been spending a short vacation in New York. It is needless to add that there was no such person as Nellie Mason, and that the money-order was not repaid.

When the first returns were in from London it was quite evident that Mr. Stone had been elected by an unusually large majority. The highly perfumed letters of recommendation that he brought over with him were all false, the supposed writers never having heard of such a person. He had been compelled to leave England because of a few slight slips of the pen, which, at this time, it is not worth while to mention,

and that at Lowestoft, where his parents resided, he was looked upon as a "very slippery gentleman," whose true name was not Stone, but Hartley.

Not long afterward, and quite recently, Stone attempted by misrepresentations to procure a large amount of money from certain Wall Street brokers, which would enable him, he said, "to return to England and live in splendor." But the scheme failed after he had procured a few hundred dollars, and, instead of being permitted to enjoy the magnificence of the old world, he suddenly found himself enjoying the splendors of one of the oldest prisons in New York.

## THERMOMETERS AND BAROMETERS.

In a single day the Department received a thousand complaints from postmasters in all parts of the country, calling attention to "the greatest swindle of the age," which was being worked through the mails from Indianapolis. On the following day two thousand similar complaints were received, while on the third day as many came as had been received on both of the other days.

Somebody awoke that day to the fact that there must be a screw loose in the machinery at Indianapolis, and I was wired to go forthwith and see if I could not discover what was wrong, and, if possible, apply the remedy.

Soon after my arrival I ascertained that the trouble had been caused by a little circular sent to every postmaster in the United States and Canada by a firm known as I. C. Gordon & Co., who had lately opened a place of business in the Thorp Block. These circulars had been so ingeniously drawn that about 34,000 postmasters had failed to discover the trap set for them, and had rushed in blindly, drawing in several thousand of their friends also. When it dawned upon them that they had been misled, they sought to

get even with Gordon & Co., by reporting them; hence so many complaints.

The circular contained a beautiful cut of an elaborate signal service combination thermometer and barometer, which Gordon & Co. were manufacturing at their new and extensive works in Indianapolis. Then followed a sketch of the distinguished philanthropist who invented and gave to the world, through Gordon & Co., the wonderful combination thermometer and barometer, the accuracy and delicacy of which were absolutely perfect.

Then the various uses to which these particular instruments could be used were graphically portrayed; and to any merchant, mechanic, professional man, or farmer, it was guaranteed that if the price of the instrument was not saved by its use in a short time their money would be refunded. Owing to a serious break in the quicksilver market, these instruments could now be furnished by Gordon & Co. for $2.50; whereas before the break in quicksilver, the price of the signal service combination had never dropped lower than $4.25.

Now was the time to take advantage of cheap prices. Gordon & Co. desired agents in every town and hamlet in the world. They requested each postmaster to send them the names of two or three reliable men in their section, who would be willing to handle the best selling article on earth, at which they could easily earn from $10 to $20 per day.

The price of a sample instrument to any person, whose name the postmaster might furnish, would be placed at the remarkably low figure of $1. a mere

nominal sum. For the generous services of the postmaster one instrument, embracing the entire combination, would be forwarded free of cost—on receipt of thirty-seven cents to pay for boxing and packing.

When at first a hundred letters or so a day would be received at the post-office for Gordon & Co. nothing wrong was suspected, but when the number rose in one day to two thousand it was discovered that Jim Wildman, the postmaster, had been appropriately named. He flew frantically to the house of Gordon & Co. to ascertain if the business was straight.

He met Mr. Gordon for the first time on this occasion, who took great pleasure in showing him through the establishment and introducing him to the large number of employés, who were all busy opening letters, counting stamps and money and packing the instruments for shipment.

Mr. Gordon also called the postmaster's attention to a large number of cases packed around the outer walls of the rooms. Suspended from the side of each of the cases, as you have seen shoes hanging out of shoe boxes in stores, was one of the signal service barometers and thermometers combined, indicating that each case was filled with them. This had a business look and greatly pleased Mr. Wildman, who was a business man.

Mr. Gordon related to the postmaster the various interesting circumstances that combined to bring him from Pittsburg, where he left a good business, to embark with Mr. Arthur Block, his partner, in this business, which, he was very happy to say, was turn-

ing out to be much more lucrative than either Mr. Block or himself had anticipated.

Up to this time there had been a lingering doubt in Mr. Wildman's mind about the genuineness of the business, but the mere mention of Mr. Block's name dispelled it all. If Block was a partner no further inquiries were necessary, and the postmaster quietly withdrew, after having apologized to Gordon for having bothered him when he was so busy.

Mr. Arthur Block was a gentleman who needed no introduction to the business people of Indianapolis. He was the business manager for one of the largest printing establishments in the city; prominent in the secret societies, and treasurer of one or two. His family and their associates were regarded as among the most respectable people in the State.

The reputation and character of Mr. Block was spotless, and it is evident that almost any person who knew him would have reached the same conclusion the postmaster did the instant he was told that Block was a partner in the thermometer and barometer business. So much for a good reputation.

The business of Gordon & Co. progressed vigorously and uninterruptedly from that time forward till the complaints from thousands of postmasters, who had forwarded 37 cents and had received nothing, had become alarmingly conspicuous. The enterprising firm withstood the storm of indignant letters and postal cards just as long as they thought the genial atmosphere of the Indiana capital would be beneficial to their happiness, and than they suddenly, and without warning to their employes and creditors, decided to

take a rest. They rested sometime during the night before my arrival.

The morning I came, one of the creditors had made the startling discovery that the large cases, supposed to be filled with thermometers and barometers, really were filled with air, which at that time was not worth much; and over Gordon's desk was pinned a little note, informing those interested, that Mr. Gordon had suddenly been called away east, and that his stay might be indefinite.

Soon afterward it was also learned that the truly good man, Mr. Block, had not appeared at his business that day, and neither had any excuse for his absence been received; and still later, when he could not be found, it was discovered that the accounts of the Printing Company would not balance into a thousand or two, and that the funds belonging to the various lodges and trusts had also disappeared.

Indianapolis was so badly shaken up by these revelations, that the town clock stopped. The people had not known much about Gordon, but they had expected better things of Block. The only thing that astonished me particularly, was the fact that, with the price of glass, tin, and quicksilver at the maximum, a whole wagon-load of the simple barometers and thermometers could be bought for two dollars and a half.

But it was a clever scheme, and Gordon & Co. had gone with a handsome sum of money. So extensive a swindle could not be easily condoned, and we must bring the men back. Inspector Ray was assigned to assist me.

In looking up Gordon we ascertained that his real name was Benjamin Franklin Gardner, and that he possessed a few talents that were decidedly original. He had lived in the oil country in Western Pennsylvania, where he was well known. We had Block located in a short time in Philadelphia, where he had engaged as a traveling salesman; but we did not care to molest him till Gardner was in hand, fearing that if one was arrested and not the other, we would never get the other.

Not long afterward we heard of Gardner in Florida, where, under the name of Heuling, he was booming a new town. Ray was to go after Gardner, and I was to bring in Block. By an arrangement, neither of us was to disturb our man till each was ready, so that the arrests might be made simultaneously, thus guarding against accidents. The plan was carried out to the letter, and, on the day that Block was "rung-up" in Youngstown, Ohio, Gardner, alias Heuling, was surprised in the land of flowers. Both were returned to Indianapolis, where Block's friends went his bail for appearance at court. Gardner, having no influential friends, was compelled to remain in jail, awaiting the trial. The case was finally called before Judge Blodgett, of Chicago, who was chosen in place of the regular judge, who did not desire to preside.

Both prisoners were easily convicted, but for some reason, unknown to the writer, the court set the verdict of the jury aside, so far as it pertained to Block, and, as a sort of compromise to Gardner, he was sentenced to one year at hard labor in the

Hendricks county jail, and given credit for the time he had already spent in the Indianapolis jail.

At the Hendricks county jail, Gardner made himself generally useful, teaching the sheriff's children, till one afternoon when he went with them to a neighboring wildwood to instruct them somewhat in the works of nature, he forgot to return. I believe, however, he did return in a few weeks, bringing with him one of the signal service thermometers and barometers, which he presented to the sheriff, for which kindness the sheriff generously allowed him to remain till his time was up.

While enjoying the hospitalities of the sheriff the last time he decided to drop quicksilver, and put some of his knowledge of oil to practical use; so he wrote a play, in which there were four characters; a legitimate broker, an assumed oil man, a smart young man who could keep his mouth shut, and a newspaper reporter. He determined to carry out his play in reality, and his first move was to secure employment on a Chicago newspaper. Then he contrived to secure an assignment wherein a visit to a well-known Chicago firm of brokers was necessary, cultivated their acquaintance, kept posted on oil, and when the shut-down movement began in Pennsylvania gave the firm a "tip," which proved to be the right one. Gardner also made friends in all the other newspaper offices. Finally he made the startling assertion to the brokers that he could break the oil market to any figure he wanted. They were interested, and Gardner pulled out his little play

and read it from the manuscript. It was decided to push the scheme; Gardner and the broker to play two of the parts, while Richard Galvin and Alexander Reno were secured for the others. Galvin is an actor, and Gardner engaged him at a dramatic agency. Galvin was to play the assumed oil man. His work was to be done in one night and $40 and expenses were to be the reward. Reno was to play the smart young man, and the four came together and actually rehearsed their parts. It was decided to locate the imaginary well on the farm of E. S. Harris, eighteen miles from Carmi, Ill. Reno was sent to that point.

The same night the actor registered at the Briggs House, in Chicago, as Morris McLaughlin, of Bradley, McLaughlin & Co. Gardner, in the meantime, sauntered along the street, and encountering a newspaper man, invited him into a saloon; the broker, per instructions followed, suddenly interrupting the conversation with a sneering reflection at Chicago natural gas discoveries, and intimating that it was no sensation at all compared with the discovery of oil in Illinois. Gardner feigned ridicule, and the broker insisted that the man who owned the well was at the Briggs House.

Naturally the reporter made a bee line for the hotel, talked with McLaughlin, and by him was shown a pan of genuine petroleum which had been procured from Pennsylvania. Gardner, in the meantime, watched for other reporters, and with the aid of his broker accomplice soon had them looking for

McLaughlin, who, as part of the plot, exhibited a telegram from Reno at Carmi. It read as follows:

"Well continues to flow at intervals of twenty minutes. Powers estimates the output at eighty barrels an hour. Gas strong and can be heard miles away. Will look for tanks *via* Short Line."

Later in the night a newspaper wired Carmi to investigate the report, and the lone and innocent operator used the only information at hand. He duplicated Reno's message in substance. The next morning the oil market in the East broke and the Chicago broker cleared $20,000. Gardner does not know whether that was all his profit, but at any rate a division was made on that basis, which he says was almost as good as the thermometer and barometer business.

# THE FORCE OF HABIT.

It had become evident that some person, somewhere in Central Illinois, was tampering with the mails, and more particularly with that portion of them known as registered letters. Letters that contained valuable enclosures, generally money, were often received at the offices to which they were intended, and by the persons to whom they were addressed, in a slightly damaged condition and minus a portion, if not all, of the sum stated to have been enclosed. The reports of this nature were becoming so numerous that it was decided that other work must be dropped till after the thief had been caught.

By grouping the complaints, comparing the indorsements on the backs of the package envelopes, and by studying the movement of the mails on certain stage-routes, and railroads, it appeared to one well trained in that business, that the depredations were being committed in the office at Lincoln. There was just one fact, however, that did not harmonize with the theory. It did not seem possible that the letters that had been rifled could have remained in the Lincoln office a sufficient length of time for a person to have performed the work so cleverly. Not one of

them had been delayed anywhere, and they had all evidently been opened by the same person.

Henshaw said he knew it was done in Lincoln because it could not have been done anywhere else. So he went down to take a look at the postmaster and the clerks, without letting anybody in Lincoln know who he was or what was up.

By putting himself in a certain position on the outside of the post-office, at about the time of day the robberies must have been committed, if done there, he could command a very fair view of the desk on which the registers were handled. He saw one peculiar motion and withdrew, thoroughly satisfied it was done right there, and by the assistant postmaster.

The next day, at the same hour, Samuel Glover, the same assistant postmaster, on the same desk, rifled another register letter and from it took $40 of Henshaw's personal funds. Of course, if Glover had known that the forty dollars belonged to Henshaw he would never have taken it; for everybody had heard of Henshaw, and knew that it was dangerous to appropriate anything that belonged to him. This same assistant postmaster knew this as well as anybody in Illinois, but he was so very anxious to get the $40 that it never occurred to him that the money might be Henshaw's.

Henshaw was so particular about small financial transactions, that he would never put even a dollar in a letter to be mailed without carefully taking a description of the bill. He did this partly from force of habit (though this is not the one I am aiming

to illustrate), and partly as a precautionary measure. He wanted to be able to identify it should he be favored with an opportunity.

There were a few who did not know that Henshaw was so particular, but I trust no one will be foolish enough to fancy, for an instant, that he could not tell the spots on every one of those forty dollars that Glover had just stolen from the registered letter.

Time and again had Henshaw performed the act of leaving some of his money in a thief's way, and he had yet to make a mistake or lose a dollar. He knew he was right on this occasion; yet when he asked Glover to return the $40, Mr. Glover became indignant and said he did not have it. He said he did not have it because he knew not what else to say. Up to this time, no one in Lincoln ever thought that Sam Glover could tell even a plain, simple falsehood; much less a cool, calculating lie. If there was anything the average Lincoln man despised, it was the colossal liar. A man might do other mean things in Lincoln and thrive, but if he was caught in a gigantic lie the first families would surely turn their backs upon him.

Henshaw told Glover he didn't care to catch him in a lie, and be under the painful necessity of letting the reporters know for how small a sum it had been told. It was bad enough, Henshaw said, to steal, but to steal and lie too, and be caught at both, was a very bad example for an exemplary gentleman to hold up to the other members of society, who had no use for liars.

Still Glover did not appear to reason like that, and

still he insisted that he didn't have the $40; but when Henshaw said he would have to make a search, the thief weakened and quietly produced the identical money, which was handed to the postmaster to compare with the memorandum. Then he wanted Henshaw to promise to let him off and keep the matter out of the papers, if he would pay back something like $700 he had stolen and sent to a friend in Louisville for safe-keeping.

Henshaw never made promises he knew he could not keep, but he recovered every dollar that had been stolen; with which every loss was made good; the service in that section was purified; the newspapers had their say, and Glover went to Joliet for three years. That's the kind of a man Henshaw was. Now comes the force of habit referred to.

It is the custom when you are sent to the penitentiary—I mean when any one is sent to the penitentiary—for the warden to ascertain what occupation the prisoner last followed, so that the prisoner, if possible, may be employed in the same manner while he is serving out his sentence.

Well, Glover didn't know anything but post-office business; so they put him in charge of the prison post-office, the former postmaster's time having expired the very day that Glover registered. Matters ran smoothly for a time, as they always do with new postmasters.

After a few weeks, however, complaints commenced coming, to the effect that valuable letters and packages mailed by friends outside to prisoners inside failed to arrive. The trouble continued. Glover said

it must be in the Joliet office, and it did look that way. Henshaw went down to ascertain, and in less than half a day he had his man, and it was—Glover.

The prison post-office being a private one, no arrests could be made for depredations made on the mails after the same had been delivered from the regular post-office at Joliet. A few courts have ruled, however, within the last few months, that any person, who steals or rifles letters after they have left the custody of the department, and before they reach the hands of the persons to whom they were addressed, shall be punished the same as if the depredations had been committed before the letters left the regular post-office. This construction of the statute will sooner or later become general, as I think it should.

Nothing, therefore, could be done with Glover, but to remove him from office. So he was transferred to the cuisine department, where he spent his leisure moments preparing soup and hash, two familiar articles of mild nourishment, from which nothing valuable can be stolen.

## BLINKY MORGAN, AND THE KID.

BLINKY MORGAN was a very bad man; the very worst I ever encountered. Too bad almost to write about, and I assure you I would not mention him now only for the fact that the record might be considered incomplete if I failed to refer to the most notorious character that ever robbed a post-office or shot men down as one would mad dogs.

I regret to state that I have been unable to obtain positive information as to his origin and right name, and I doubt if anybody knows where he came from or who he is. It is possibly best that it is so. I first heard of him scarcely two years ago, when, with two others of his kind, he made a tour of Indiana, starring the larger towns cracking safes.

Morgan was a stoutly built man, of probably forty-five years, though, as he always appeared in stylish suits, shiny beavers, eye-glasses and gold-headed canes, he appeared much younger. His partners were younger still, though equally as well appearing. One was quite small and the other was quite tall and slim. Upon the trains and at the hotels they might easily be mistaken for genteel traveling men instead of accomplished burglars.

At one well known town in Indiana the trio appeared one day. They did not enter the hotel together, neither were they assigned connecting rooms, and never were they seen in conversation; still they were there all the same. Quite a number of offices had already been cracked, and much was being said about the robberies in other parts of the State. After putting himself in trim Morgan sailed out to interview the sheriff. He was a fluent talker and could easily mislead any unsuspecting person.

He found the sheriff at his office, and when he told him he had called for a private interview the office was cleared. Morgan told the officer that he had been sent out from Washington by the Postmaster General, who was much displeased at the inability of the Inspectors to run down and capture the gang of burglars that were making such sad havoc among the Indiana post-offices. His instructions were, he said, to confer with the sheriffs at the principal county seats with a view of making them more vigilant. The sheriff was pleased to receive so much attention, and, after visiting for half an hour, the two went out to admire the beauties of the town.

Passing the post-office, they stepped in to pay their respects to the postmaster. The sheriff introduced the gentleman from Washington, who incidentally stated his business. He looked around approvingly, and finally with his cane marked the spot on the safe where the burglars had been in the babit of boring through the door to strike the combination. After eulogizing the Postmaster General on his efforts of reform, the stranger and the sheriff withdrew. Out-

side they separated. The gentleman from Washington told the sheriff he was going over to Peru and would be back to-morrow, when he would call on him again.

Those who have since come in contact with Morgan will easily understand how much like him this transaction was, and those who know him will scarcely be surprised when I state that on that night this post-office was robbed, and that the safe door was bored exactly where the gentleman from Washington had marked it with his cane.

The most dejected man in town the following day was the sheriff, and the second most disconsolate was the postmaster. Every effort possible was made by the police and the local detectives to find the stranger, but he had changed his appearance and silently stolen away.

It was evident to me that the burglars were working northward and that we would next hear of them somewhere in Western Michigan; and sure enough we did. Manistee was the next town that was reported. Here they made a big haul, and, as usual got away with it.

The day before the robbery here the men were seen and suspected, for the reason that one of them —the small one—was identified by some one as Kennedy of Detroit, who had a terrible record. Search for Kid Kennedy, as he was known, was instigated and pursued everywhere, but without avail.

The next week two safes in Ludington went down in one night under the magic manipulations of Morgan, Kennedy & Co., but for some unknown reason

the one in the post-office was spared. And here as elsewhere the burglars succeeded in escaping the officers. This satisfied me that they were very keen, for no town was better equipped at that time for capturing robbers than Ludington. The sheriff and chief of police were rustlers of the old school, and they were made of the truest metal. Yet, for all this, you will bear in mind that no suspicious persons had been seen, no one had been suspected and nobody was captured.

The following week a gayly mounted circus was passing through the land and in its fancy flight halted for a day in Hart, the county seat of Oceana county. It is a well established fact that nothing attracts the bad men like the circus. Others go to purchase amusement, but they follow in its train because of the crowds and confusion which better enables them to operate unobserved.

Thus it was that we looked towards Hart for another attempt to deplete the post-office revenues, and our suspicions were proven well founded on the following morning by a telegram from the postmaster, which simply stated that his safe and two others in town had been robbed during the previous night.

I repaired to Hart as quickly as possible, where I learned that in the morning after the robbery a fine team and wagon had been stolen from the stable of one of the citizens, and that they had been tracked northward on the road leading in the direction of Ludington, and that at that minute the postmaster, the sheriff and others were following in hot haste.

About eight miles out they found the team unharnessed and quietly feeding by the roadside.

Two miles further on they were informed by a farmer that three men took breakfast at his house about two hours before, and that afterward they went northward across the fields toward a piece of woods, saying they were going through the woods to a road beyond.

The farmer gave an excellent description of the men and said he believed they were heading toward Ludington. One of the pursuers was directed to return to Hart with the stolen team and to wire the officers in Ludington to be on their guard, while the others proceeded to the woods and continued a tireless and unsuccessful search.

Late that night a watchman on the south side of the river at Ludington was engaged to row three men across. They told him they had been out to a party near there and were just returning. Only for their general appearance, which indicated a long tramp and much fatigue, and their queer-looking bundles, the watchman possibly would not have been suspicious.

Fortunately, too, he had heard of the Hart robbery, so he lost no time in letting the police know what he had done, and on the following morning every officer in Ludington was quietly scanning the personal appearance of every stranger.

Shortly after nine o'clock a gentleman wearing eyeglasses and good clothes entered a restaurant, carrying a small hand-bag. After partaking of a hearty

meal he asked the keeper if he would kindly care for the bag till he returned an hour later.

As the gentleman walked out on the street the keen eyes of the officers were upon him, and, observing the suspicious glances, the stranger turned and walked hurriedly away. The officers followed closely. The pace of the man was quickened, and seeing the officers were also good pedestrians, he sprang like a hound and ran like an antelope toward a piece of woods in the outskirts.

This was the signal for a lively race and skirmish, and it was instantly accepted by the officers and many others who pursued with eagerness. When about half-way to the woods the officers and others realized danger, for the fleeing man had halted long enough to turn and fire three shots at the enemy.

The exciting chase continued just the same, and just as the man was about to enter the woods he turned instantly and fired twice at the sheriff who was nearest to him. The shots were returned, but nobody was hit.

Men were coming in all directions, and five minutes the band of volunteers anxious to distinguish themselves in police duty had been swollen to several hundred. The piece of woods was quickly surrounded, and when the word came from the commander of the forces, the ranks slowly began to close in. Every man had his gun and eye cocked for game—something that sometimes wore eye-glasses. The ground was a little soft and marshy and the hunters were admonished to proceed with great care.

Larry Flanders, I think his name was, was walk-

ing a log intently attending to business, when he saw something glisten underneath, and, looking closer discovered the head of a man and the bright eyes of the mysterious stranger. The good news echoed and re-echoed through the pines, and three minutes later the body had been fished out and was being marched back to town in front of rifles, shot-guns and pop-guns. What had they captured?

The little bag in the restaurant was hastily examined and was found to contain, besides a large number of postage stamps, a lot of bonds belonging to the postmaster at Hart, and several old and rare coins that also belonged to the same postmaster, and which on the night of the robbery were in the safe in the Hart post-office. The watchman identified him as one of the men he rowed across the river the night before, and then there was no longer doubt as to what had been captured.

The burglar gave his name as Charles Conklin, and in the exciting efforts to arrest him his two companions were entirely overlooked, and, of course, made good their escape. The only trace found of them was a hat which had been left at a store, where a new one had been purchased. This hat had been procured in Detroit, to which place I sent it, where Darby had it identified as Kennedy's.

Conkling was turned over to the sheriff from Hart about eleven o'clock, who, after binding him securely, left immediately with two guards.

Word had been wired that they were on their way, and when they arrived the streets of Hart were thronged with men, women and children anxious to

get a look at the most distinguished individual that had ever favored the place with a visit. Judging from appearances, and from what little he had heard Conklin say since he had been with him, the sheriff was satisfied that there was no place in Oceana County strong enough to hold him, so he proceeded by next train to Grand Rapids, a city which was famous for a burglar proof jail.

Conklin was examined on the following day before the U. S. Commissioner, who, of course, held him to await the action of the court then in session. The contents of the little bag found in Ludington were securely locked up in the great safe in the District Attorney's office, and Conklin was returned to jail for safe keeping.

That afternoon a small, bright, well-dressed young gentleman walked into the District office and asked for the District Attorney, to whom he stated that he had recently graduated from the law department at Ann Arbor, and being desirous of locating in the beautiful and flourishing city of Grand Rapids, he had been directed by a certain well-known lawyer in Detroit, to call on him, the District Attorney, who would likely consent to have him read law in his office.

The kind-hearted District Attorney said he was so badly pressed with government business just then that he would be unable that day to talk with him at length on the subject of admitting him to his office, but if he would come around the following day he might be able to spare him a few minutes.

The young gentleman did not mark the spot on

the safe with his cane, where he would be best able to strike the combination, but as he gracefully withdrew, the attorney turned to one of his associates and remarked that he was very favorably impressed with the young man, and he prophesied a brilliant success for him in the legal world.

That night some burglar stole into the basement of the government building in Grand Rapids, worked his way unobserved up through the post-office to the floor above, opened the door of the District Attorney's office with a jimmy, and was at work on the door of the safe inside, which he had almost succeeded in opening, when he heard the footstep of the watchman in the hall outside, jumped to a window and slid away on a rope, without securing the articles he was after. The young lawyer from Detroit did not return on the following day, and the District Attorney saw nothing that resembled him except the picture of Kid Kennedy.

Conklin was indicted by the grand jury then sitting, and was at once arraigned for trial. He had engaged one of the shining lights of the Grand Rapids bar to defend him, and when his case was called the attorney asked to have it put over to the next term, stating that it would be manifestly unfair to his client to be tried now, without being allowed time to secure witnesses to prove his innocence and good character.

The District Attorney told how simple the case was, and plainly illustrated that it was one of the positive kind that did not even admit of any defense, yet it went over for three months, and Conklin was again taken back to jail for safe keeping.

About this time a strange woman appeared in Grand Rapids, who said she was Conklin's wife. She brought him new suits of clothes, and tried to fix him up so that the argus-eyed farmer living ten miles north of Hart would not be able to recognize him as one of the three men he entertained the morning of the robbery. The woman got the clothes and other things into Conklin's possession some way, but the farmer said he guessed it would bother anybody to get that peculiar spot out of Conklin's right eye.

Still,notwithstanding this unsurmountable obstacle, the woman secured apartments in Grand Rapids and was allowed to do missionary work in and out of jail, long after everybody had been informed that she was not Mrs. Conklin, but the notorious Mrs. Lowery.

It became necessary to know something more about Conklin, and with that end in view we undertook to get his picture. We took him to a gallery without his knowing where he was going, but the minute he realized what was intended he became frantic. Finally, with the aid of four policemen and two revolvers, a very good negative was secured.

The photographs I mailed to all the prisons in the country, with a letter of inquiry, and from the penitentiary in Kingston, Canada, I received a reply stating that the picture was that of a man known there as Charles Morgan, who, owing to a peculiarity in his right eye was known as "Blinky" Morgan, and that a few months Morgan and a young man named Kennedy, both of whom were in the Kingston prison for murder, had escaped.

By following up the record closely I also learned that he once had a hand in a notorious robbery in New York; that he went from New York to Cleveland, where he and Charles Lowery were engaged in an express robbery where a messenger was killed. Lowery was arrested, and with the aid of Morgan and Mrs. Lowery broke jail and went to Canada. Morgan was shot in the performance, but not seriously enough to prevent him from going to Canada also. In Canada the record of the crimes of Lowery and Morgan would fill an entire book like this.

They were stealing, robbing and shooting constantly, and in every instance when they were caught, Mrs. Lowery would turn up to assist them to break jail, or, failing in this, to influence the court in their behalf, and her success had been fully as remarkable as that of the men.

They entered the residence of a wealthy man in Belleville one night, and after they had secured all that was valuable and were leaving they were surprised by several railroad men. The robbers held the entire crowd at bay and succeeded, as usual, in escaping, though Lowery was afterward caught and returned to Belleville.

Two days later Mrs. Lowery turned up and after a few days of her peculiar work Lowery escaped and returned to the states, where he was shortly afterward caught for some robbery in Pennsylvania, where he was sent up for ten years.

The same day that Mrs. Lowery assisted Lowery to get away from Belleville, Morgan shot and killed Jas. Marooney, omnibus driver at the Walker House, To-

ronto, having also fired at and shot a policeman named Cuddy, slightly wounding him. Morgan was tried and convicted of murder in the first degree, but the presiding judge would not accept the verdict and ordered the jury back. They afterwards found a verdict of manslaughter, and Morgan was sentenced to five years in Kingston penitentiary, where he remained less than one.

Having learned all this it was now quite clear why Morgan wanted time to prove his innocence and good character, and it was equally as clear what Mrs. Lowery's particular business was in Grand Rapids. The sheriff in Grand Rapids, who was now the sole custodian of Morgan, was fully advised of these startling revelations from time to time, and finally, when it was known positively that arrangements had been completed for Morgan to break jail this fact was also telegraphed by me to Grand Rapids.

Still with all these precautions Morgan did actually break out of that burglar-proof jail, the night before the court was to convene, and great was the excitement in consequence thereof.

It may be interesting to know how he did it, and as the story is quickly told, I will repeat it *verbatum* from the *Leader* of the following evening:

"Turnkey John Platte of the county jail awoke and arose at the usual hour this morning and came down from his room in the second story of the residence portion of the jail. As usual, he rapped on Sheriff Kinney's door, and then opened the front door and let in Phillip Boos, the watchman, who for a

month past has been keeping guard of the jail premises and patroling the yard outside.

"His next move was to open the wooden door leading from the office entrance hallway into the prison department. The two heavy padlocks which were put on the iron door to make it more secure were lying on the floor on the threshold. The iron-grating door was ajar.

"Continuing his investigations Platte, leaving Boos at the door, proceeded into the jail, found the iron door open leading up stairs and which at night is always fastened with a Yale padlock. More surprised and mystified than ever, Mr. Platte wended his way up the stairs and to the door of the east corridor, where the prisoners held on the most serious charges are confined. This doorway was open. Passing into the corridor the door of the cell which Conklin, the post-office burglar, was confined in, was found ajar and the cell vacant.

"Pale, breathless, and terribly excited by his discoveries, Platte conveyed the startling news to Sheriff Kinney, who was then making his toilet. Without formality and without boots, collar or vest, his face blanched with astonishment and surprise, the sheriff hastened to make an examination of the premises. The doors, from the lower outside to the inner cell door, were all unlocked and open.

"Not a scratch or mark was visible on the locks or bars to show that violence had been used. His own keys, the official keys of the jail, and the only ones known to be in existence, were in his safe in his office where they were left the night before. In Conk-

lin's cell was a dummy made of quilts and bed ticking, and a letter was found pinned to its breast. No trace or shadow of the missing prisoner could be found, nor were any clues left behind.

"'How did Conklin get out?'" demanded Sheriff Kinney of Boyd, the murderer, who occupied the adjoining cell and who was aroused from his sleep by the officers.

"'Didn't know he got away! Is he out?'" replied the still half-asleep Boyd, who was startled into wakefulness by the news. He very apparently had not the slightest inkling of how the thing was done, nor when.

"'Did you hear Conklin get away?'" asked the sheriff of young Terrill, who occupied the next cell to Conklin on the other side. Terrill was as much surprised as Boyd and could hardly believe such a thing possible. None of the others in the corridors could shed any light on the affair. They were all asleep and none of them were aroused from their slumbers.

"Philip Boos, who has been keeping guard at the jail premises for several weeks past, who last night patrolled a beat in front and on the south side of the jail portion of the yard, had seen no suspicious circumstances or persons about the building during the night. It was seemingly a mystery to everybody."

The only amusing feature of Morgan's escape, and the only one that contains very much mystery, is found in the valedictory which was pinned to the dummy in the cell. It reads as follows:

"MR. SMART SHERIFF: your Watchfulness has, Broken My heart, look at the wreck you have maid of Me. I hope you will Burry me in the ventalate whare you Prevented me from getting out by your Watchfulness. you are very Wachfull But thare ar Others that are mor watchfull than you. I am Sorry for Big John he was so very Kind to me and My whife. he Ot to have ben Nommated for Sheriff. Such a Nobile looking man. Geate god, the Cock-roaches will miss him when he his gon. Th only frend I had in your hotell was littell Graice. When she reads this letter she will Laugh untill She will be unabill to talk. I will miss the Mush and Milk and Roust Beefe, that is it, I think I Eate to much Beeff, that is wot Kild your two Blood Hounds. Well, Mr. Wachfull, my Spirit will be in Europ befor you get the crape of of your old Hat. I am much obliged to my many friends for sending you so many letters about Me. No wonder your Hair is gray.

"Very Respectfuly,

"CHARLES CONKLIN.

"P. S.: If you offer a Reward ofer a Big one So that the Snakes will git well paid for finding me.

"Ratts."

At the time of Morgan's escape, I was engaged in the east on an important case, and so of course, could not give him any attention. The District Attorney and the Marshal in Grand Rapids, however, wrote pleadingly to the Post-office Department to assist them in finding him, which I think could have been easily done, but for some reason a deaf ear was turned to

their appeals, and not the slightest effort was ever made outside of Grand Rapids to recapture him. But it may be of interest to many to know if we ever heard of him again, so I will briefly relate.

Scarcely three months afterward there occurred, in the winter of 1887, in Cleveland, one of the greatest robberies on record. On this occasion the largest fur store in that city was entered through the roof of the building, and thousands of dollars worth of furs were stolen in a single night. The work of the robbers was done so cleverly that there was positively no clues to aid detection, and the best detective skill in this country was employed on the case.

After several weeks of hard work it was settled that some of the stolen goods had found their way into Pittsburg, and, as a result of careful watching, Kid Kennedy—the same young man who wanted to read law in Grand Rapids—was arrested in Pittsburg, and charged with having been connected with the robbery. He was examined and held, and two Cleveland city detectives, Capt. Henry Hoehn and Mr. W. H. Hulligan, left Pittsburg one night with Kennedy to take him back to Cleveland. Everything on the trip passed without interruption till just after the train had left Ravenna, when, without warning, Blinky Morgan, James Robinson, and John Coughlin entered the car and commenced shooting at the officers and others.

The train was stopped, when the terror-stricken passengers jumped for their lives. Kennedy was released, when he quickly disappeared in the darkness with Morgan, Robinson, and Coughlin, while the two

detectives were left for dead. Soon afterward Hulligan died, but Captain Hoehn, after much suffering, recovered. As soon as possible, after such an encounter, the train proceeded, when everybody in Ravenna turned out to run down the murderers. But they didn't run them down.

When the news of this sad affair reached Cleveland in the morning, the excitement was very great. There was nothing that the public-spirited citizens were not willing to do to bring Morgan and his crowd to justice. Large rewards were offered for them and everything was done that human hands could do.

Men were sent to all parts of the country to watch for them and to see if certain prisoners, who were suspected, could not be identified as being some one of the number wanted. Photographs and descriptions were sent to every sheriff and chief of police in this and every other country, and, at last, after several months of anxious waiting, the effects bore fruit.

Charles L. Lynch, the sheriff of Alpena, Michigan, quite unexpectedly one day, discovered that there were three strangers stopping at the house of Mrs. Frank Williams. They did not go out much and their peculiar actions somewhat excited the curiosity of the neighbors.

Mr. Lynch compared their descriptions with those sent out by the Cleveland people, and found a very striking resemblance. So striking in fact, that he decided to arrest them and send to Cleveland for some one to come and identify them. He summoned a sufficient number of men to assist him and on the

following morning they were to watch their opportunity. Quite early, Robinson and Coughlin came from the Williams residence and started toward the wharf, where was lying a steamer going to Detroit. The two went aboard the steamer, and were quickly followed by half a dozen of the sheriff's party, who soon surrounded them, and instantly pointed three revolvers at each person and commanded them to "hold up." They were securely bound, and before the news could reach their rendezvous, the sheriff and three others started back to arrest the third man.

Arriving at Mrs. Williams' establishment, they quietly entered, and, an instant later, sprang upon Morgan, who was visiting with Mrs. Williams and making a bouquet. Quick as was the sheriff he was not quick enough, for before he got the irons on his prisoner, Morgan had fired and hit him.

The wound was not considered dangerous, so Morgan and party were transferred to Cleveland, and soon afterward Mr. Lynch died from the effects of Morgan's shot. I should, perhaps, add here that Mrs. Williams is a sister of Mrs. Lowery.

From Cleveland, the three robbers and murderers were taken to Ravenna for trial. Morgan was tried first and was found guilty of murder in the first degree and was sentenced to be hanged in the penitentiary at Columbus, on March 16, 1888, and it was hoped by everybody that nothing would happen to interfere with the highly appropriate proceeding.

In this fond hope, the people were somewhat disappointed. Mrs. Lowery went to work again, and a stay of two months was granted in February to enable

the Court of Appeals to decide whether or not he should have a new trial. Strange, isn't it, that such a man should receive any consideration, especially after it had been once decided to hang him!

Fortunately the anxiety felt on the announcement of the two months' stay was dispelled early in April, by an announcement from the court that there was not good ground for a new trial, and that Morgan must hang on June 1st, 1888.

Robinson was also convicted, and was sentenced to be hanged in Columbus, April 27, 1888.

Coughlan likewise was convicted of murder in the first degree, but before he received his sentence a new trial was agreed upon, the result of which is not known at this writing.

Kennedy, the Kid, I regret to say, has not been recaptured, and his whereabouts are unknown. Of course he is practicing law somewhere, and if any of my readers will write and tell me where, I will arrange matters so that they will not be obliged to do any more real hard work for several years.

# THE PERRY RUBBER WORKS.

ONE Christmas day, about two years ago, found me in Des Moines, Iowa, which, by the way, is a very pleasant city to spend a holiday in. The day was unusually cold and windy, and as I was hugging the hotel fires closely, contemplating a pleasant visit at John Beckwith's that evening, to attend a Christmas festival, I rejoiced to think my business was such that it would enable me to remain indoors for at least one day, and especially one like that. Presently the mail from the east arrived, and among the letters I received was one that appeared to be important, and, one that being important, demanded immediate attention.

It appeared from the numerous papers in the case that the Rubber Works located at Perry, Iowa, had for some time been receiving money from almost every State in the Union, which it had retained without forwarding anything in return to the people who had thus contributed to its funds. Inasmuch as I had made arrangements to leave Des Moines on the following day in another direction, I was compelled

to send my regrets to the Christmas tree and go to Perry that afternoon. The train was to leave at one o'clock. It was prophesied at the hotel that owing to the terrible wind-storm it would not go. But it did go, and I went with it.

About an hour later when we reached Perry the wind was blowing a hundred miles an hour, and the mercury in the thermometers had dropped completely out of sight. The train was side-tracked to make way for the storm, and the passengers were comfortably housed in the depot building.

Five minutes later I went out on the south side of the depot to take a retrospective view of the town, and to see if I could perceive the Rubber Works. The Rubber Works were not visible, and neither was there a man, dog, nor other living thing in sight. The post-office, the stores, and even the saloons, were closed, as they are on the Sabbath. It was a splendid day to remain indoors, so I returned to the waiting room to converse with the station agent.

He stirred up the fire, added four bushels of soft coal, and then conveyed the cheerful intelligence to the anxious passengers that they might as well try and be comfortable as there would probably be no more trains out or in that day. "Owing to the storm," he said, "the wires are all crossed or down, and here you all are like shipwrecked voyagers on a lonely shore, unable to journey elsewhere, or even receive information from friends."

I told him, if the wire between the depot and the Rubber Works was working, I would be obliged if he

would call up the works and ascertain if the secretary or any of the officers were in.

"The wire between the depot and what place did you say?"

"The Perry Rubber Works."

"There is no wire running to the Perry Rubber Works that I know of."

"Well, then, how will be my best way to get over to them?"

"Where did I understand you to say?

"The Perry Rubber Works."

"I have been an operator at this station since early last spring and have been on the line for two years and a half, and I'll be hanged if this isn't the first time I ever heard of the Perry Rubber Works. You have surely struck the wrong town. There are half a dozen other Perrys scattered around in other States that I know of, and probably you will find the Rubber Works in some of them. Surely they are not here."

"No, I am not making any mistake. I was directed to go to Perry, Dallas County, Iowa. This is certainly the spot for the Rubber Works, and where are they?"

"Yes, this is Perry, Dallas County, Iowa, sure enough, but—"

"Mebby he means Jim Johnson's place, where Frank Peters used to make rubber stamps last summer," chimed in an interested auditor on the back seat.

"Possibly," said the operator, "What do the people make that you want to find?"

"Judging from the appearance of the complaints, I should say, rubber stamps."

"Well, then, come with me," said the interested auditor, who had awoke sufficiently to think he saw a small fee, I believe it's Johnson's place you want."

I borrowed a buffalo coat of the operator, and soon the I. A. and myself had started for Johnson's place. We backed against the cutting wind around half a dozen blocks to one end of the town, and finally brought up at what would have been an entirely vacant square only for an old building that graced the center. From the appearance of the surroundings it was evident that it had once been a blacksmith shop. There was no sign of life, and to enable us to escape the fury of the blast we quickly entered through a window.

In the further end of the deserted and desolate place stood a ladder leading to a hole in the floor above. To my astonishment my companion led the way to the ladder and commenced to ascend. I attempted to follow, and, being about three sizes larger than the other gentleman, and, being burdened with the great coat, which added to my natural weight considerably, a painful realization soon stole over me that the ladder was too frail and the hole too small.

I was obliged to reduce my corporosity and avoir dupois by removing all the clothing possible, which I sent up on the end of a long bellows-handle that had evidently been blown out of place by the bursting of some of the strong wind condensers and cold air pumps that had been shaking things up around Perry for sometime. At last I ascended without accident and entered in safety, when my shivering friend ob-

served: "Here, I think, is all there is left of the Perry Rubber Works."

I frankly acknowledge that I am at a loss to find words to faithfully picture the wild chaos and confusion that greeted my eyes. The velocity of the wind, which at the station I had estimated at a hundred miles an hour, could not even be conjectured here, while it was so cold that words fairly floated away in the form of icicles. All the windows, including the frames and sash, had fallen a helpless prey to the destroying elements and long since had been ruthlessly carried away to the mysterious somewhere; and it seemed to me that each rapidly succeeding breath of the raging hurricane would be the one upon which the interested auditor, myself, and the Rubber Works would soar away to other realms, and no one would be left to tell the tale.

The floor and a few of the rafters were still there; and in one corner protruded an iron pin with a crook on the end, above which, at some remote period in the halcyon past, the words "order hook," had been written. The hook and traces of the words remained; but the orders, alas! where were they? Ask the howling tempest.

Destruction and desolation reigned supreme, and it was evident to one unused to such scenes, that the unfilled orders, the letters, the books, the paraphernalia, and possibly the proprietor, had been induced to fly with the wind, and that the blissful days of prosperity had been suddenly, though unhappily terminated. It was a sad sight, which, mingled with fear, was rapidly making me sick—sea-sick.

The old structure shivered and shook like a floundered ship about to sink, and it seemed as if it, too, must soon go. I glanced to see if my friend was still on board, and, as I looked, he yelled: "Jump for your life, she's going."

Like a flash we sprang to the only natural place of exit, and in an instant had dropped to the floor below and had reached the open enclosure on the leeward side, and we reached the place of safety none too soon. The remaining rafters, the upper-floor, the clapboards and the order hook were the first to go. On the next blast followed all that was left below; and in less time than I have been telling you, the last vestige of the Robber Works had been wafted away far beyond the sight of human eyes, and beyond the swelling of the tide.

We lost no time in creeping back to the station as best we could, where, skirmishing considerably, I found a five dollar gold piece carefully tucked away in the only corner where the remorseless wind had failed to leave impressions of its cruel work. This I had intended for the Christmas tree, but I handed it to my kind guide, with many thanks for a safe deliverance, and with a parting request that he would find Johnson, if he was alive, and send him around to see me any time during the night.

At about eleven o'clock there was a slight indication that the cyclone was getting weary. It was still strong enough to play with a small frame house as does the small boy with the little red balloon, yet, as I said before, there was a slight indication that it was getting tired; but it was too slight to allow the

return of confidence to any remarkable degree. By eleven-fifty there was a much more hopeful feeling prevailing in Perry, and just as the clock struck twelve Johnson blew in.

He was a night-watchman somewhere; and when he enumerated the vicissitudes he had encountered in his vain endeavors to operate the Rubber Works, fill the orders promptly, compete with older established plants, still do his regular work, and then, at last, to have everything swept away in a single hour he touched a responsive chord in my tender heart, and I regretted that I had already parted with my last dollar.

The interview was highly satisfactory, and after I had told him so, I wrote a long report in which I informed the Department that I was satisfied Johnson did not start the business intending to defraud; that his faith had unquestionably been good, but that his business qualifications and endurance, had been overestimated by himself, and, not being a prophet, nor the son of one, he could not have foreseen the dire calamity that had just befallen his manufactory, in which everything had been swallowed up and carried away.

I closed by saying I felt sorry, of course, for those who had paid for stamps and not received them, but I felt confident from Johnson's appearance, that if anyone would kindly produce the original orders they would be filled. As it was, there was nothing to show who had stamps due them; nothing to show who had paid, and absolutely nothing left of the business.

At seven the next morning a train started back to Des Moines, and, after stopping occasionally to replace

some of the track that was found in the neighboring fields, we arrived without serious accident at noon. I never returned to Perry afterward, nor have I looked during the last six months to see whether it is still on the map; I may add, however, that up to this writing no tidings have reached me concerning the mysterious whereabouts of the Rubber Works.

## AN ACCOMPLISHED THIEF.

How often are appearances deceitful? How many occasions can you recall where you have widely missed the mark in attempting an estimate of a man's true character simply from his appearance? Instead of "some power to see ourselves as others see us," we are frequently more in need of some power to see others as they see themselves. Who doubts it "would from many a blunder free us, and foolish notion?" The appearance, for instance, of Mr. W. H. Stark, indicated that he was an honest, upright, Christian gentleman. Everybody who saw him thought so, and none of his associates ever dreamed of anything to the contrary. It seems stranger than fiction, and so it is.

Stark was a thief by nature, and in every position he had held from childhood to middle-aged manhood the funds of his employers had stuck to his fingers. Happily, for him, he had wealthy and influential relatives, who always came to his rescue. At last, when they were unable to place him in any private business where he could earn a livelihood, and, when no one who knew him could be induced to give him employment, they procured for him a position of trust in the New York post-office.

Neither before nor after Stark's appointment was it deemed necessary for the postmaster to look up his record, because such "splendid recommendations" could scarcely be obtained from none other than a first-class man. But the postmaster was sadly deceived, as have been many other appointing powers, who have listened only to the plaintive tales woven by seductive spoilsmen, whose highest aim is often to force upon the government persons wholly unfit, and who, perhaps, as in Stark's case, are unable to make an honest living where they are known.

Matters ran smoothly for a while (as they always do till the thief can measure his ground and plan to operate successfully), till one morning a telegram came, announcing that a package sent by one of the banks in New York to another bank in Charleston, which contained $10,000, was not in the pouch when the same was received in the Charleston post-office.

An investigation developed the fact that it would have been next to an impossibility for the package to have been left out of the Charleston pouch, either accidentally or intentionally at the New York office. The pouch arrived in Charleston in good condition, and the rotary number on the lock corresponded with the number named on the bill enclosed in the pouch. The pouch was opened in the Charleston office in the presence of two persons, who solemnly testified to the fact that it did not contain the package in question.

The officer in charge of the investigation reported that, in his opinion, the depredation was not committed in New York, but that the package was stolen in the Charleston office. No one doubted his sincerity,

but subsequent events show that the case was closed too soon, and before all of the persons who could have stolen the package were satisfactorily investigated. When the excitement had subsided, which large losses naturally create, matters in the registry division dropped back into their usual quiet mood, and thus they continued for many months.

After a while, however, smaller losses, though equally as mysterious as the one just described, would be reported from time to time. The complaints were multiplying. Indeed, so frequent and regular were they coming that a most thorough investigation was demanded, and one was now in progress.

In order that it might be thorough and effective, no employé of the office was permitted, either by word or sign, to infer what was going on, and it had not progressed many days before certain astonishing facts were developed that completely snatched every ligament of the sanctimonious mask from the false face of William Henry Stark.

Dosser and myself had scarcely recovered from the sensations which follow great surprises, when, one evening late, as we were discussing the interesting situation, word came from the registry division that another large package of money had just mysteriously disappeared. We were wholly unprepared for this, but it may be interesting to know that, in unison, we spoke the words: "It is Stark."

What were the particulars? It was about nine o'clock. The through register pouches from Kansas City, Memphis, San Francisco, St. Louis, St. Paul and Portland had been received and opened, and the

total number of pieces having been verified with the total number on each accompanying bill, the packages were laid out on a long table, the contents of each pouch separate, though side by side in rows.

The next operation was another verification and a separation—the packages for the city from those addressed to offices in the vicinity. The second checking of the Kansas City, Memphis and San Francisco bills had been completed and the clerks had begun on St. Louis, when very soon, much to their astonishment, it was discovered that there was a package short—there being none to correspond with number 47 on the bill. It was described as from Ironton, Mo., to Hoboken, N. J., and was evidently a letter of no great value.

It had likely been accidentally misplaced, and a thorough search for it was instigated. This occupied considerable time, inasmuch as every package that had arrived that evening must be carefully examined. Not till they had reached the contents from the Portland pouch did they find the package from Ironton. No one could explain how this particular package should be found in the Portland pile, and the situation was still more mystified when, by the second comparison of the actual number of Portland pieces with the total on the bill, it was found that there was one missing, and that the Ironton package had been substituted to make the count correct.

The cool-headed superintendent in charge took in the situation instantly. The bill showed that the missing package had been mailed in Portland and its destination was New York, and he had observed that

on almost every night for weeks there had been received from Portland, Oregon, a large package of money addressed to the Park National Bank, New York.

The one that had evidently arrived on this occasion had been stolen, and, too, by some person in the room where the pouches were opened. He therefore directed that no one should leave the building without his consent and he stationed a guard at the door to see that the order was obeyed.

The package was probably stolen an hour before this, as about that much time had been consumed by the search, and, of course, during that hour the thief could have placed it where it could not be found.

The clerks were marched in a body to another room, where they were confined till, one by one, each had been taken out, searched and thoroughly questioned. Stark, much to the surprise of many, was not excluded, and, by arrangement, he was not called upon till all the others had passed the dreaded ordeal of the inquisition. During this time the missing package had been found on the floor, in the corner of a closet, covered with scraps of waste paper. It was taken to the bank, where it was opened and found to contain $10,000.

When Stark's turn arrived to be examined he came in looking slightly dejected, though affecting a happy frame of mind. The flood-gates were gradually opened, and the screws were turned tighter and tighter till finally his true character was so perfectly revealed that he broke down and admitted having

stolen not only the Portland package, but the Charleston package, and others as well.

The following day he waived examination and the wealthy relatives came forward promptly and gave bail for his appearance at court. A day or two later he could not be found. The amount of the bond was paid, and the accomplished thief had sailed away to a foreign land, where he now dwells in peace and plenty, and where his unconscious neighbors most likely regard him as the most pleasing American they ever met.

## JACOB SNEYDER'S TEST.

PEOPLE who are in the habit of enclosing money in ordinary letters to be sent by mail ought to correct themselves as they should of any other bad habit. While a person might follow the practice for a lifetime without injury to himself, the chances are more than even that, sooner or later, he will meet with, perhaps, a serious loss.

A friend of mine, who had unconsciously fell into this way of doing business, and who had followed it for many years without annoyance or loss, one day enclosed a hundred dollar bill to his wife with instructions for the lady to pay the taxes. The letter miscarried and the money was lost, while the taxes were still unpaid on the last day. Experience, which is often a cruel teacher, thus taught him the simple lesson I am now endeavoring to teach you.

If you could have seen the thousands of complaints of losses of this kind that I have seen in my time, you would not wonder that I charge you to turn from the evil practice which is indulged in by so many of our people. While all of the ordinary letters that are lost are not stolen, many of them are, especially if they contain money.

The thief in the postal service is the exception; but is it any wonder that men, appointed as they are, because of no especial qualifications for the work they are to perform, should now and then turn out to be bad? We occasionally hear of such things in the higher walks of life, where men are supposed to be selected and retained for their fitness.

Then again, the ordinary letter thief has opportunities unequalled for his nefarious operations. Thousands of letters a day are passing through his skilful hands, which have passed through, or which are to pass through many other hands before they are properly delivered. He can slyly steal a few and who can tell which one of the many took them?

The ordinary letter thief works in a fertile field that knows no bounds; and the remorse, the heartaches and disappointments that follow his villainous endeavors no pen can describe. The thieves are not all caught, but eventually most of them come to grief.

They are the most dangerous class of dishonest employés in the postal service, and the postmaster or other officer who has reason to suspect one, and who, instead of dismissing him, does not report his suspicions where they will receive attention, commits a grave mistake.

The people from one end of the country to the other, as well as the thousands of honest employés, are vitally interested in his arrest and conviction. In my judgment there should be no mercy shown him, and the Department should bend every energy and

spend every dollar necessary to turn him over to the tender mercy of an upright judge.

Frequently he becomes so skilled in his work that days and weeks are devoted in the search for him, and then days and possibly weeks are devoted in efforts to catch him. Almost always he is one that nobody ever suspected. Usually he is a person who stands well with his working associates, and who has been an ornament in the circle of his home friends and companions.

The very nature of his aims have made him sharp and cunning, but his friends and family have never noticed it. To illustrate how proficient they sometimes become, allow me to relate the little story of Jacob Sneyder.

Jacob was an assorting clerk in the post-office in Chicago, and, during his palmy days at the case, many ordinary letters containing money were being lost. After a few weeks, as Stuart would say, it was "a cold day" when thirty or forty complaints were not received.

In that office alone were five hundred or more clerks and carriers who could have stolen the letters, yet in all probability four hundred and ninety-nine of them were honest and would not steal. Stuart and others worked days and nights ceaselessly, trying to locate the five hundreth man, and finally decided that Jake Sneyder, one of the oldest in point of service, and one of the best in knowledge and rapidity, was guilty of all.

They had not seen him steal, but they had discovered certain unmistakable signs, known only to those

whose business it had been for years to locate crimes of this character.

It did not seem hardly possible that a man of Sneyder's make-up and social standing could be a thief, but actions spoke louder than the kind words of those who had always known him, and it was not long ere he fell before the strong glare of positive proof, and became a prisoner, in burning tears of unwilling submission.

In his confession that followed he told how he had successfully carried on his operations so long, and related with much interest how skillful experience had made him. He could tell, he said, by the touch of an ordinary letter whether or not it contained money.

He did not ask that any-one believe the improbable statement unless he was given an opportunity to demonstrate its truthfulness. He asked that a hundred letters be prepared and that in only one of them there should be placed a dollar bill, and he would pick out the one that contained the money.

The test was prepared, and in two of the letters, instead of one, was placed a dollar each. The package was handed to Sneyder, who to the surprise of everybody present, handled the letters rapidly, as if assorting them in a case, and when he reached the only two that contained money he threw them out, and, turning to his interested auditors, triumphantly asked: "How vas dot for high?"

Jacob did not think it was so very high, when three days later Judge Blodgett told him in plain, common English, that he believed they could dispense with his valuable services for about four years.

# PROFESSOR CURTIS, OF SYRACUSE.

PICTURE in your mind's eye an Apollo, who, like the mythological and classical son of Jupiter, was a god of eloquence, medicine, and the fine arts, and it may aid you in mentally grasping the character known as Professor Curtis, who flourished for a brief period in Syracuse, N. Y., about the year '87 in the nineteenth century.

The Professor belonged to a well-known family in Buffalo by the name of Osgood, and when I remark that the Osgood family was a great family, not one of the thousands who knew the family will gainsay the observation. The head of this remarkable family was probably the noblest Roman of them all, and, like Hercules, the famous hero of antiquity, was celebrated for his size and strength.

The fair-haired Professor was the monarch's eldest, and, at the time of which I write, was seven and twenty. He possessed the neck and shoulders, and possibly a few of the more prominent characteristics of his worthy sire; but, unlike the swarthy parent, his skin was fair, his eyes were blue, his face was beardless, his cheeks were rosy, his hands were white

and soft, and, in the language of Dick Swiveller, he was a "flower."

Frequently he had been known to drop the honored family name, which had become familiar in the land, and assume some other, which the scribes and pharisees were unused to. This had been done, I regret to say, for the purposes of deception—to better enable him to fill his coffers from the pockets of the unwary and unsuspecting, who are everywhere. You may infer from this that he practiced to deceive, which inference will be correct, for the art of deception was among the finest of which he was the haughty master.

It would be a tireless task even to attempt to give you in one small volume the multitude of names he had been known by, and the various places in which he had practiced; so I have concluded to allude briefly and solely to his masquerades under the delusive title of Professor Curtis, of Syracuse, Mandana and Camillus.

Sometime during the early portion of the year named, a small room on the top floor of the Weiting block, in Syracuse, was rented for a few weeks by a stranger, who gave no reference, and on the following day a small sign, which read, "Empire News Company," was hung on the door. In this little room, and under this business-like cover, Professor Curtis, his brother, and somebody who called himself Roberts, but whose right name God only knows, assembled to promulgate the Professor's latest racket.

They first mailed to two or three thousand newspaper publishers, outside of the State of New York, two small advertisements, for the publication of which

for thirteen weeks, on the local page, next to pure reading matter, the publisher would receive one copy of Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, bound in sheep.

This proposition was exactly what many publishers had been waiting for (the professor knew it), and fully fifteen hundred embraced the golden opportunity. The advertisements were headed "Bargains in Music," and "Another Art Craze," which described articles that would be forwarded on receipt of price by the Empire News Co., principal office, Syracuse, N. Y., U. S. A.

These propositions had scarcely passed out of the Syracuse post-office before two or three thousand others followed, which promised an Unabridged Dictionary for an eight weeks' publication of two other short advertisements, which were headed "Ladies Guide to Fancy Work," and "Ladies, look here." These also described something that would be forwarded on receipt of the price by the Empire News Company, principal office, Syracuse, N. Y., U. S., A. This proposition, you will observe, was much more liberal than the first, and, therefore, was accepted by eighteen hundred papers.

But those propositions and advertisements were merely feelers to prepare the way for the grandest conception of the Professor's brilliant career. The following alluring decoy was then dropped to the entire list of previously favored publishers, and the same will bring a smile from at least the few who have not previously seen it :

CHRISTIAN HERALD :—Mr. Roberts is perfectly reliable.

CHRISTIAN ADVOCATE :—Prompt and reliable in all his dealings, Mr. Roberts is entitled to public confidence.

BAPTIST :—Mr. Roberts is a gentleman with whom it is a pleasure to transact business.

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Office of C. H. ROBERTS, Advertising Manager for the Empire News Co. General Advertising Agent.

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SYRACUSE, N. Y., Feb. 23d, 1887.

*TO PUBLISHER :—*

Dear Sir :—For the insertion of the three following advertisements Four Months (without change) per directions TO PRINTER, I will send you one set of CHAMBER'S ENCYCLOPEDIA, in six volumes, bound in sheep, library style, the price of which is $24.00. The books will be shipped when advertising is half completed and the express charges are to be paid by you. Advise me of your acceptance of proposition and address me as ADV. AGENT so as not to confound this order with that of the Empire News Company. You will please observe directions carefully, so as to avoid unnecessary correspondence.

Very truly yours,
C. H. ROBERTS, Advertising Agent.

N. B.—Publishers with whom we have accounts will be furnished with any books known to the trade at reasonable prices to apply on advertising.

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TO PRINTER :—Set all of the following advertisements as nearly as possible like copy with heavy displayed headings. They must be inserted immediately following or along side of pure reading matter, all to be run FOUR MONTHS (without change) and only one to be inserted in the SAME column. Follow directions carefully.

After you have feasted on the above sublime work of art allow me to call your interested attention to something in the medicine line, which appears in the form of the three advertisements, referred to above by the "perfectly reliable," yet unknown Roberts. These appeared in probably fifteen hundred papers:

ABUSED WIVES

Or maiden ladies suffering from any form of female complaint, sick or nervous headache, liver or kidney troubles, CAN BE RESTORED TO PERFECT HEALTH by Prof. Curtis' Iozone Treatment, which is the greatest boon for women ever discovered. It makes no difference what you have taken or who has failed to cure you. One trial of this treatment will always convince an entire community. The more desperate the case the more convincing are its merits. During the next thirty days one five dollar treatment will be delivered to any lady in the United States FREE who sends both express and post-office address and fifty cents to cover charges, boxing and delivery. In ordering ask for "Treatment A."

Address CURTIS IOZONE COMPANY,
Syracuse, N. Y.

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ARE YOU NERVOUS?

Or do you suffer from indescribable feelings, both mental and physical? Have you overworked or from other cause become debilitated? Do you lack ambition, strength and vitality from any cause? If so afflicted or if troubled with desease of any nature send a self-addressed stamped envelope, with description of case, for full information concerning Professor Curtis' IOZONE TREATMENT. It is

endorsed by the clergy, the press, the medical profession and all intelligent persons who have investigated its merits. A five dollar treatment delivered free to one person in every town. Give both express and post-office address and enclose fifty cents to cover charges, boxing and delivery. In ordering ask for "Treatment B."

Address CURTIS IOZONE COMPANY,
Syracuse, N. Y.

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## CATARRH CURE.

Professor Curtis has thoroughly demonstrated by his great discovery of Iozone that this dreadful disease can be quickly and permanently cured. It makes no difference if the case has become chronic or medicines have failed. The Iozone Treatment will cure it every time. It is neither drugs nor snuff, and should not be classed with patent nostrums. To introduce this new treatment on its merits we will deliver, charges prepaid, one regular five dollar treatment FREE to any catarrh sufferer in the United States who sends us at once both express and post-office address and fifty cents to cover charges, boxing and deliverv. In ordering ask for "Treatment C."

Address CURTIS IOZONE COMPANY,
Syracuse, N. Y.

The results of skillful advertising were probably never better illustrated than in this particular instance. Soon the mails were swollen with letters for The Empire News Company and the Curtis Iozone Company, and it was truly astonishing to see how many responsive chords the professor had touched with his magic wand. It was evident that the fool-killer had not made a tour of the country for some

time, or else, as Gilbert, the observing postmaster said, the people were crazy to get something for nothing, and thereby had been inveigled into a device from which they receive nothing for something.

And the foolish publishers—those wise guardians of the people against the false whims and crooked schemes of the confidence man and the designing knave! What kind word can I add that will in a measure compensate them for their disappointment in not receiving a single dictionary or encyclopedia, or even an answer to a single letter asking for them? Not one.

The Professor—the silver-tongued god of eloquence, medicine, and the fine arts—tarried in Syracuse till the low rumbling of distant thunder admonished him of the approaching storm, when he, like the slippery Arab, folded his tent and silently stole away—to Minneapolis, leaving his younger brother to battle with the warring elements a while longer, when he too, was to silently steal away, and follow.

But the storm gathered sooner than it had on previous threatening occasions, and just as the brother had packed all there ever was of the Empire News Company and the Curtis Iozone Company in one small trunk, and was about to step aboard a west bound New York central flyer, smiling Justice laid her warm hand upon his shoulder, and through the eloquent interpreter Dosser, said, "Don't go," and, like meek Moses, he gracefully consented to remain.

When the elegant Apollo reached Minneapolis he induced another brother (it was a great family), who was himself a professor—a dancing master—and a

young man named Archdeacon, who did not have a dollar, but who expected something from his father in far-away England, to allow themselves to be known as The Northwestern News Co. of Minneapolis. This Company (?) rented another fifth floor room, and its sole object of pretended existence was to buy out The Empire News Company and the Curtis Iozone Company of Syracuse, and to receive the mail that the combination had ordered forwarded when the storm in Syracuse became tempestuous.

The first lot forwarded from Syracuse after Alfred B. Osgood, (who by oversight had not changed his name,) had been arrested, contained thirteen hundred letters and two thousand postal cards. These letters like the others that followed, when they reached Minneapolis were by the carriers shoved through a hole in the door of the office of The Northwestern News Company, where they were quietly opened by Professor Curtis, who pocketed the money and looked wise. These strange proceedings so frightened the dancing master that he ran away to Kansas City, while poor Archdeacon, without waiting for his money from Wales, actually took to the woods. Did Professor Curtis also flee? Not then.

By this time he had, under his own name, William Gardner Osgood, established a daily paper, and by the time I arrived in Minneapolis he had sold it to a rival, and had swindled very many people with whom he had had dealings. The atmosphere of Minneapolis had really become too oppressive for him, and, having cracked all of the golden eggs that had fallen into The Northwestern News Company's basket, and

having heard that he was wanted in Syracuse, he purchased a ticket, the day I arrived, and fled to that asylum for American thieves, robbers, and plunderers —Canada.

In due time Alfred B. Osgood was arraigned for trial in the United States court, in Albany, before Judge Coxe. The trial lasted two days, during which time very many interesting details were brought out. The court room was constantly packed. Judge Slow, of Buffalo, assisted by the able elder Osgood, and a sprig from Minneapolis, were the polished counsel for the defendant; while District Attorney Lockwood, aided by his assistants, Mr. Hoyt and Colonel Welch, took charge of the prosecution.

When Judge Slow wiped the perspiration from his brow, took a refreshing quaff, and entered the arena to address the jury, he was the image of a vanquished hero. Yet, being conscious of a solemn duty to perform, he gently pressed the lever, and soon had soared into the mystical realms of blissful imagination. His allegorical flight was prolonged for nearly two short hours, during which time he had painted and repainted in crimson and gold the immortal and spotless beauties of charity and sympathy, and, at last, when he wiped his tear-stained eyes and took his seat, it occurred to many that he had omitted to mention the Syracuse fraud case.

When this interesting and instructive panoramic scene had been carefully rolled away, another was introduced, which was different. When Mr. Lockwood arose to speak all eyes were turned to see, and all ears were turned to hear, and there was silence in the

court. Here was a man—a noble man—who had been a neighbor of the defendant's father, and who had watched with pain for many years the tangled webs the sons were weaving. He knew it all. What would he say? There was so much that he could say, and so little that he ought, perhaps, to say, that, to some, he appeared puzzled.

He confined himself, however, closely to the evidence, which in itself contained enough hard and ludicrous facts to form the basis of a master address. His vivid pictures of the meek defendant, the gorgeous professor, and the unknown and mysterious Roberts, who had conspired to rob, by use of the mails, were alike charming and pathetic. He indulged in no fancy flights; he called things by their right names; his shots were aimed at the bull's-eye every time, and in just forty-two minutes by the clock he had knocked the Syracuse fraud case sky-high, and had snatched away the glittering habiliments of deception from the interesting trio, which he held, as he turned to take his seat and receive the generous congratulations of the entire assemblage.

There was little left to be done. The judge addressed the jurors briefly, who scarcely left their seats before agreeing upon a verdict of guilty, and five minnutes later the young man arose and was sentenced to prison. It was a sad scene, as such scenes generally are; but there would have been no tinge of sadness had Professor Curtis, of Toronto, been present to have received just a little of the reward that is awaiting him.

We are listening for his gentle footstep on the shore, and you can rest assured that when he comes, no man will give him a more joyous greeting than the Honorable Daniel N. Lockwood, of Buffalo.

## AN AWAKENING AT ALVIN.

ALVIN is a small town in eastern Illinois, a short distance north of Danville, and is a junction of a branch of the Wabash system with the Chicago & Eastern Illinois railroad. The place is large enough to stand the racket of a small brass band, but not of sufficient consequence to support a hotel or bakery. It was evident that either the postal clerk running on the Wabash branch or some person in the Alvin post-office was stealing ordinary letters and rifling registers.

After a two-hours' consultation on the case by a committee of three, Henshaw, "Judge" Bedell, and myself, it was unanimously decided that the work was not being done by the postal clerk. It was too well performed. No living being on a railroad train, by any known or unknown art, could cut and reseal a registered package envelope as artistically as these had been cut and resealed There was no record of any work of the kind that approached it.

Could it be the postmaster at Alvin? It certainly had that appearance, but he was a man who seemed as far above a crime of this kind as conception could conceive. He had not been disturbed. No one had

written to him and nobody had called. His suspicions, if he had any, had never been aroused. But there was certain information about the office we must possess, and we must know more about him and his methods. Yet, it would not answer for an Inspector to call on him on any pretense whatever. What should be done ?

The postmaster was a druggist, and sold cigars ; so we decided to fit out Bedell as a cigar agent and let him call in the regular course of business and do a little drumming and pumping. A fancy case was borrowed of a regular Chicago dealer, into which was neatly packed a sample box each of McConnel's Perfectos, Con. Mehoney's Shamrocks, Mrs. Kelly's Pappooses, Carter Harrison's Best, Fred Hill's Favorites, and Tol. Lawrence's Prides. A team was procured two stations north of Alvin, and down into the sleepy hamlet Mr. Brooks, the agent of Chesterfield, Schoolcraft & Browning, quietly wended his way and presented his card at the Alvin drug store and postoffice.

It was harvest time and mid-day trade was quiet, so of course Mr. Brooks found abundant opportunity to do business without being jostled about by applicants for tobacco and tanglefoot for medical purposes. His prices were the most reasonable of any agent who had called since the war ; but that was explained by the fact that this house always surprised its customers with good goods and low prices, and this was Mr. Brook's first trip through that section, and his first visit to Alvin. As a result he remained three hours, sold two dozen boxes of Perfectos, four dozen

Pappooses, a whole case of Lawrence's Prides, and went to dinner with the postmaster.

When he reached Danville about four o'clock that afternoon, where he was to report to Henshaw and myself, he was radiant with the enthusiasm of well earned success. He had studied the Alvin postmaster as thoroughly as he did the ten commandments when a child; was present when the Wabash mail arrived and saw the postmaster distribute it alone for the Eastern Illinois going north; sold him a fine bill of goods, which was not to be delivered on account of the pressing business of the house for two weeks; saw the postmaster lock up the office and went to dinner with him, after which he returned to the office and saw the postmaster endorse the registers and lock out the mail for the Eastern Illinois, north; and everything had been done by the postmaster exactly as a thoroughly honest, upright, conscientious postmaster would do it.

There had not been the first false motion, word or suspicious circumstance, and he would wager his entire lot of samples that the postmaster was one of God's noblest works—an honest man.

He admitted, however, that the facts of the losses were stubborn and that the circumstances were peculiar, and, having now a good knowledge of all the conditions he thought the tests should be applied. It was accordingly arranged to remove from the Wabash mail every day for a week every registered letter of natural origin that would pass through the Alvin office, and substitute decoy or test letters.

These would remain in the Alvin office about

two hours, when they would be placed in the postal car going north on the Eastern Illinois, where they could be hastily examined. It was more of a difficult task than the reader can imagine. The work of preparing the test letters, so that they would appear exactly like genuine ones that had been mailed at the various offices along the line of the road, occupied several days, but by the end of the week we were ready to begin on the following Monday.

Two lists of the letters to be sent through each day for six days, and a minute discription of the contents of each letter, were prepared. Henshaw, who was to go along the Wabash and attend to the delicate task of removing the genuine and substituting the false ones, took one of the lists, and the other was retained by Bedell and myself, who were to examine the letters when they came from the office and were placed in the north bound car. It would necessarily become our duty also, in case anything was wrong, to strike while the iron was hot and secure the transgressor.

On Monday the letters came through in good condition. Tuesday and Wednesday brought no good results. By making haste we could usually get them out of the pouch and have them examined before the train left the Alvin station. By so doing it would give us an opportunity to step off the train, and thereby save time, if the examination proved that the letters had been meddled with.

On Thursday, while the train was still standing at the depot, we found our letters, examined them, and, as usual, pronounced them correct. The train pulled

out and had proceeded probably a mile before we had opened the letters to examine the contents, when, to our surprise, we discovered that two of the eight had been rifled and the money was missing.

Quick as lightning the bell cord was pulled, and long before the engineer had come to a full stop, Bedell and myself could be seen walking hurridly down the track toward the station. We entered the post-office as coolly as though we had called for a prescription instead of a thief, and found the postmaster handing out the mail that had just been assorted. Bedell did not look as Brooks did and so he was not recognized.

We waited patiently, listening to the torturing discords of the Alvin Silver Cornet Band that was practicing in the room above the store, till finally the patrons had departed, when I approached the postmaster and informed him of my unpleasant mission, which was, in effect, that some person in the Alvin post-office had, within the last three hours, abstracted $67 from the two registered letters that I held in my hand, and that my friend and myself had called to recover the money.

"Merciful God," said the postmaster, "it is impossible. No person handled those letters but myself; there is my endorsement; so help me, I did not open them, and I swear with uplifted hand before my Maker that this is the truth." As I turned to Bedell, as much as to ask if he ever heard such a falsehood, the gentle summer breeze wafted in something that admonished us that the silver cornets were trying to catch the air of "Dan Tucker." Bedell, feeling sorry

for the postmaster, the band, and me, turned to find relief by reading the labels on the bottles.

I told the postmaster that while I did not charge him with the crime I would like to have him satisfy, if he could, that the money taken from the letters was not then in his possession. To this he most cheerfully assented, and search was made not only through his clothes, but through every conceivable place about the office and store where it could possibly have been secreted.

At length we became satisfied the money was not there, but, of course, not satisfied that the postmaster had not taken it. I asked him if any person other than himself ever assisted in handling the mails, and he answered: "No one." "Does not some person other than yourself have a key that will unlock either of your store doors?" "Yes." "Who is that person?" "It is George Havens, the leader of the band." Turning quickly to Bedell, I said: "The leader of the band has a key to the rear door, and he steals in while the postmaster is at dinner."

Five minutes later the horn that once through Alvin's hall the soul of discord shed, now hung as mute on the band-room wall, as though that soul had fled, and George Havens had been called to account for appropriating to himself certain funds that had not been contributed for the purpose of buying instruments, music, and flashy uniforms. But George had been around the world some himself, and had learned a few airs and quicksteps not mentioned in the books. He was a hard nut to crack.

We labored incessantly with him till sundown, and

had taken the horns and band-room apart, had been through his residence, with his wife's permission, from the bottom of the well to the top of the lightning rod; had torn up the floors of several neighboring buildings; had been through the brick-yard and the burying ground, and, in brief, had completely upset everything in Alvin looking for the $67 which we did not find.

There could be but one conclusion. Either the leader of the band or the postmaster had the money, and we were agreed that it was not the latter. As a last resort we decided to take Havens to Chicago, and, possibly on the trip up, or during the night in Chicago, we might get something from him that would clear away the mists.

We reached the city at ten o'clock, without obtaining anything except the ride, and by 10:30 we had reached the office, where Stuart, whom we had informed of our coming by wire, was anxiously waiting to relieve us and spend the night with Havens. About four o'clock in the morning, Stuart's burning eloquence began to be felt, and, by sunrise, Havens in tears had confessed everything he had been charged with, and told how he stealthily entered the rear door of the office and committed the depredations while the postmaster was at dinner.

Stuart and Havens left for Alvin on an early train to secure the money; and as they were digging it up in a grove a few rods back of the Alvin post-office, the friends of Havens, who up to this time insisted that he was innocent, concluded, from the appearance

of the valuable articles that were unearthed, that the treasures of Captain Kyd had at last been found.

The postmaster, who was one of the finest gentlemen I ever met, was so effected by this terrible affair that soon afterward he sold his business and moved away. Brooks gave his remaining samples to Stuart, while poor Havens went to play B flat in prison.

# CAUGHT WITH A SCRAP OF PAPER.

THE post-office at Attica, Indiana, had been robbed. Unknown persons had entered it through a rear window sometime during Sunday night, and on Monday morning when the mailing clerk arrived, the stove was scattered in fragments around the floor, the letter boxes had been emptied, the safe blown open, its entire contents missing, and the room still retained a strong odor of powder.

It was a genuine robbery, and, for a place of the breadth and thickness of Attica, it was something much more than an ordinary, every-day affair. The postmaster had barely enough money left to wire for help.

When I arrived on Wednesday he informed me that no strange persons were seen in town prior to the robbery, but that on Monday morning about six o'clock, two young men called at the residence of Mr. James Beasley, a farmer residing about six miles eastward, and wanted to engage him to take them to Thorntown, a distance of about twenty miles as an Indiana crow flies. Beasley was a busy farmer, and, not being in the livery business, declined.

They then asked the distance to the nearest station

on the Wabash railroad, and when Beasely informed them, they told him if he would hitch up and take them over they would give him a dollar and a half for his trouble.

Beasley said he would do it, just to be accommodating, and by so doing made a blunder. If he had told them he would do it for two dollars and a half he would have been engaged just the same, and Beasley saw his mistake, as a great many others do, when it was too late.

The only vehicle handy that morning was a small buggy containing one seat, and into this the three men placed themselves, Beasley in the middle, and proceeded to ride to the railroad. While Beasley was hitching up it occurred to him that it was very singular that two fine-looking, well-dressed gentlemen should call at his house so early in the morning and want to hire him to take them to Thorntown, and finally be satisfied with a mile and a half ride for a dollar and a half, which was a dollar a mile, to another place.

His curiosity was thoroughly aroused, and when he got into the buggy with them he intended to look them over very closely indeed, and give them a few questions to crack.

Scarcely had they started before he asked them how it happened that they came along so early. "Have not been walking all night, have you," he asked with a laugh?

The larger one of the two then told Beasley about his lovely home in Kansas; about his poor mother dying in Ohio; about being on the way to her

funeral; about meeting Mr. Cushman, the other gentleman, on the train; about Mr. Cushman being on his way to Cornell University, and last, though not least, about the wreck on the I. B. & W., which compelled them to leave the train and get across the country to the Big Four or the Wabash. The reason he mentioned Thorntown particularly was because he had a wealthy aunt residing there, and he was thinking some of stopping to make her a short visit.

"But what do you carry in that roll, wrapped in light paper, sticking up through your inside coat pocket?" asked Beasley.

"A present for my aunt," was the laconic reply.

Turning to Mr. Cushman, the quiet gentleman who was on his way to college, Beasley asked: "What are you carrying those iron articles for in your overcoat pocket, that I'm sitting on; you are not going to open a hardware store in connection with the school, are you?"

Just then they came to a bend in the highway and the depot was visible only a short distance ahead, and just at that instant, without stopping to answer the question, Mr. Cushman and the big fellow jumped out, and the big fellow said they guessed they would walk the remainder of the way.

"All right," said Beasley, who stopped his horse and commenced to look for a good place to turn around. On his way back he said to himself: "they are a queer pair." They were soon out of his mind however, and in a few minutes more he was home attending to his chores, just as though he had not received one-fifty for almost nothing.

Tuesday morning the weather was a little lowering, so he concluded to drive into town and learn how many were killed in the I. B. & W. wreck. When he learned that there had been no wreck on the I. B. & W. or on any other railroad, he said to Mrs. Beasley: "How could those fellows, whom I carried yesterday morning, have had the audacity to tell me such a cold-blooded falsehood?"

A few minutes later when Mrs. Beasley had heard of the robbery, she answered the question.

In my interview with Beasley, he informed me that he looked the young men over very closely, and so firmly were their features impressed upon his mind that he could pick them out of ten or fifteen thousand. I had never met a more sanguine man. I arranged with him to take a few days' vacation, and, in less than an hour and a half after my arrival in Attica, I was waiting at the railroad station with Beasley for a train to take us to Indianapolis.

Thorntown, from Beasley's house was directly on a line toward Indianapolis, and, while there were many other stations nearer to Beasley's, Thorntown was the only one between LaFayette and Indianapolis, where every train that passed over the road was sure to stop. Here was a water tank whose supply was never exhausted, and this fact we assumed the robbers knew, as well as some others. They knew if they could reach Thorntown by Monday night they would be able to catch a south-bound freight that would land them in Indianapolis, and no one would be the wiser.

All day Thursday, we looked for the mysterious

strangers in Indianapolis. We went everywhere where such persons would likely be. A thousand men I saw who looked something like them, but every time I called Beasley's attention to them, he would say, "No." To the captains of the police Beasley described the men minutely. They could think of none who answered the descriptions in every particular. Beasley examined the pictures in the rogue's gallery and in every other gallery, and all without success.

The captains said they would wager their lives that the men did not belong to Indianapolis. If they were looking for them they should go straightway to Dayton, Ohio, "where," said they, "more thieves hang out than in any place in North America, with the possible exception of Windsor, Canada." It is true if these men belonged to Dayton, they would have taken exactly the same course to reach home that they would have taken to reach Indianapolis.

Friday morning bright and early found us in Dayton, waiting for an interview with the Chief. Presently he came, and to him and two of his assistants I told the story and Beasley described the men. They had a man there who answered the description of Cushman, the quiet gentleman, and they also knew one who answered for the large one, but they had not heard that he was out of prison yet.

Handing Beasley an album, containing the pictures of a few of the well-known notables, the chief asked him to see if he could recognize any of them. Scarcely had Beasley commenced to turn the leaves of the book before his eye caught a familiar face, and,

jumping from his seat, he said: "That's the big fellow."

"This was Tettman," they said, "one of the most accomplished safe workers in the State, and the little red-headed fellow, whom you describe, is Reddy Jackson, a quiet hard-working robber, though not as renowned as the former."

The officers assured us that if these men were in Dayton, they would be only too happy to find and deliver them to us, and with this end in view every policeman in Dayton was notified to search for them, and to run them in if possible, while Beasley in high glee took a position on a prominent corner to scan the passing throngs.

About seven o'clock that evening word came over the wire to head-quarters that Tettman and Jackson had been safely landed in one of the station houses. It was quickly arranged to remove them to the county jail, a more secure place, and it was desired to have Beasley stand just outside the door of the station house, so that when the prisoners were marched out to enter the patrol wagon, he might get a good look at them under an electric light, and thereby make sure that they were the ones we wanted.

When they passed him he turned to the crowd, and with much complacency said: "Them's the fellows."

Afterward, while interviewing one of the officers who made the arrest, as the men were coming out of a notorious saloon, he told us that when he told Tettman that he wanted him, Tettman instantly put a piece of paper in his mouth and commenced to chew

it. The officer did not like the looks of the operation and he grabbed the man by the throat and ordered him not to attempt to swallow what he was chewing.

After considerable of a struggle he secured a portion of the piece of paper, which he handed to me saying: "I don't know as it amounts to anything, but I was afraid it might, and so took the precaution to prevent its destruction; sorry I was not quick enough to get it all." The little scrap of paper contained the following memoranda:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 12,427 | at | 2c. | 248.54 |
| 3,240 | " | 4c. | 129. |
| 747 | " | 5c. | 3 |
| 892 | " | 10c. | |
| 165 | speci | | |
| 400 | du | | |

On the preliminary examination before the commissioner in Dayton they fought bravely. Their case was managed by the best counsel that could be obtained, who attempted to prove that Tettman and Jackson were in Dayton the day before the robbery in Attica, the day of the robbery, as well as the day after.

In fact there was very little proof necessary for their side that they did not produce, but the quality, unfortunately for them, did not equal the quantity.

Beasley's straightforward story was accepted by everybody, and when we proved by the postmaster from Attica that the number and the denomination of the stamps stolen from his safe corresponded precisely with the number and the denomination as

noted by Tettman on the little slip of paper, which he attempted to swallow, the case was closed and the prisoners were sent to Indianapolis for trial.

On the trial the same character of evidence was introduced by the defendants. Ours was also similar, though in addition to that introduced in Dayton, we proved that a novel and ingenious brace found on Tettman's premises in Dayton, which contained irregular and unnatural features, and which left the same impressions on the safe, was the only brace in existence that could have performed the work which the Chief of Police in Attica pronounced "exquisite,"

The jury was out just five minutes, and two hours later the two distinguished travelers, who mistook Beasley for a chump, were enjoying a free ride to Michigan City, where they are still industriously working for the State, cracking pig iron instead of safes.

## VAN ZANDT AND HIS WIVES.

As far back as I was ever able to trace the pedigree of Hank Van Zandt, I found evidences of bad blood, and very much to support the old and well established law of nature, that "like begets like." There had been something wrong with his great-grandfather, something decidedly irregular with his grandfather, and something worse with his father.

In each succeeding generation the inevitable marks of the unalterable decree were stronger, and before Hank was hardly big enough to smoke cigarettes, it was observed that there wasn't a straight hair in his head; and before he was fifteen it was prophesied by good prophets that all the meanness of the old Van Zandts was likely to be developed with accrued interest in the tender sprout.

And the prophets were right; for, by the time the little Van Zandt had become of age, he could have made his entire line of ancestors blush at their weakness; while at twenty-five, some of them, I think, would have disowned him, and swore they never spelled their names that way.

He had now killed a woman in Wisconsin and a

cow-boy in Texas. He had burned several buildings after he had robbed them; had stolen several horses in Iowa; had kidnapped a girl near Kalamazoo; had married four others, all of whom were living; had attempted to shoot several of his wives' relations; had robbed the Express Company three times; had run away with a red-haired girl from Sturgis, and was now at work trying to steal the earth, or, what is next to it, rob the United States.

When I tell you that up to this time he had never seen the inside of a jail, nor had ever felt the cruel touch of a stern officer, you can probably form an indistinct idea of the wonderful acuteness, to say nothing of the remarkable audacity and treachery, he had inherited from his illustrious forefathers.

The little trick that first called my attention to him was this: He had picked up a weekly paper published at Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin, which contained a personal notice that read as follows:

"Mrs. Charles B. Smith, of Manchester, N. H., is on a visit to her sister, Mrs. Richardson, of this place. Mrs. Smith is also accompanied by her little daughter, who, we regret to say, is quite ill. Mr. Smith, in consequence of the sickness of the child, is expected soon."

Van Zandt proceeded to Hammond, Indiana, a flourishing town twenty miles from Chicago, on the Michigan Central railroad, where he sent a telegram to Mrs. Smith in her husband's name, stating that while getting lunch some thief had snatched his pocket-book, containing his money and ticket, and asked

her to forward to him, at Hammond, $25 dollars by money-order that day, so that he could proceed.

The money-order came promptly on the following day, and Van Zandt obtained the money with very little difficulty. He then proceeded to the station to wait for a train to take him out of town, but before one came the postmaster received a message from the postmaster at Fort Atkinson requesting him not to pay the order, as Mrs. Smith had just informed him that her husband had notified her by letter that he would not leave Manchester till that day. Something wrong.

Immediately the assistant postmaster sought the village marshal, who was a holy terror to evil-doers, and the two proceeded to the depot to arrest the pretended Smith. Arriving on the spot Smith was identified by the assistant postmaster and the marshal proceeded to nab him; but Smith was not that kind of a traveler, and declined to be nabbed. He was a powerful fellow, and after a blow or two aimed at each of the officers the nabbing business was postponed for awhile.

Smith dodged among the stores and packing establishments for an hour or more, closely followed by a crowd of blacksmiths and butchers, bakers and barbers, till finally he was overpowered and securely housed in the village lock-up, where a guard was placed over him till arrangements could be made to take him to jail.

Two hours later, when quiet had been restored, and there was no one around the calaboose save the watchman and the prisoner, the latter asked the for-

mer if he wouldn't be kind enough to go over to Cornwall's and get him a bag of tobacco? Of course he would; so, after locking up securely, he proceeded to Cornwall's, procured the tobacco and returned to the prison to find it deserted and alone.

The stranger who wanted tobacco, had raised a board in the floor and had tunneled out, leaving only his coat and hat. An hour later a small bareheaded man drove into town saying he had met a highwayman, who demanded his hat and other articles, which he had been forced to surrender. Soon afterward a large coatless sufferer arrived with a similar story. It was then getting dark, and, of course, the crowd of searchers found nobody that night, nor ever afterward.

Not long afterward Van Zandt worked the same scheme in another Indiana town, and thereby procured a hundred dollars, while in several places he was successful in getting away with smaller amounts. Afterwards he joined a band of robbers in the Pennsylvania mountains, where he remained a few months.

Residing on a farm near Wadena, Minn., was an aunt—the father's sister—and this aunt had been in the habit of hiding her nephew whenever he was too closely pursued; and knowing it would not be long before he would be seeking his relative's protection, I arranged with one of her unkind neighbors, who knew her and did not love her, to let me know by wire whenever Hank turned up.

It was scarcely two weeks before I received a message announcing the arrival of the gentleman on the farm. Bedell went with me, and, as soon as we

reached Wadena, we quietly arranged with two others to go out and help us bag the game. Just as we were leaving town behind a splendid pair of horses we met the aunt driving into town behind another fine pair of steppers. The farm was six miles distant, and there were two roads leading to it, of equal length, which came together about a quarter of a mile from it.

No one in Wadena knew where we had gone or what we had gone for, but we had not proceeded a mile before we could distinctly see across on the other road the lively aunt spinning homeward just as hastily as her horses could take her. Instinct, of the keenest kind, told her what those four men were up to the minute she met them; and the four men could easily guess what she was up to the minute they saw her taking the back track.

The roads were fine and the race was spirited. Both teams were now on the run, and the excitement was intense. Where the roads came together the festive female was seen standing, vigorously applying a rawhide to the foaming animals. We crowded her very closely at this point and managed to enter the yard of her house side by side.

The house stood on a slight eminence and from it we could have been seen down the road fully a mile and a half. Just before we reached it Van Zandt was observed to come out, cross the yard and enter the barn. Instinct had also told him something.

As quickly as possible we proceeded to surround the barn, but we were a hundredth part of a minute too late. Before the door on the rear end could be

reached, and just as Bedell was within six inches of it, Van Zandt slipped through and ran like a deer for the woods.

The woods were about sixty rods away and when he reached them, and commenced to shoot from behind the trees, we were closer to him than we wished we were.

When we returned for our team we discovered that the tongue of the furious aunt was hung in the middle and that it was longer than her pedigree; and after we had endured its merciless lashings for a few minutes we drove away with considerable respect for the pedigree.

We were under the impression that Van Zandt, thinking danger was over, would return to the aunt's house that night after dark, so we planned to make another visit; and at about midnight, when everything was quiet, a party of eight, each armed with a Winchester, started out from Wadena in two loads. When near the house the horses were tied and the men formed a large circle, in the centre of which were the premises to be searched.

Silently the men came closer and closer till all met around the house and barn, and, you can take my word for it, there wasn't a spot as big as Van Zandt's cheek for half a mile around that was not pretty throughly turned over; and we found nothing to repay us for our trouble except the venomous old lady, who still had her war paint on.

There were a few other places in that part of the country which we thought it would be wise to visit that night; so we took them all in with no good re-

sults, and at 7 o'clock that morning when we reached Wadena, and stacked arms in the hotel we were very badly knocked out, and would have sold ourselves very cheap had there been any buyers. I offered Bedell to the landlord as a runner for fifty cents, and even that was declined; and afterward a proposition to give him away was also spurned.

Shortly after this, however, Van Zandt came to grief in Janesville, Wis., where he was accidentally picked up on suspicion of being another man, but fortunately proved to be the gay deceiver that a short time before had married a country school-teacher near there, who, when it was too late, ascertained that he had at least four other wives, all alive and in good health.

The following day we tried to arrange with the local authorities to turn him over to the government, but the complaining lady would not consent. She was mad through and through, and would be satisfied with no compromises or concessions. She wanted to learn Mr. Van Zandt that he couldn't trifle with her affections and be happy afterward; so he got five years in the State prison, which was a year for each wife.

We filed a detainer, and when his time is out he will be taken to Indiana to answer to the Hammond affair and several others. When he has served his time for these offenses he will be turned over to the Express Company, and when he has served his time for robbing the Express he will be shot—if the father of the red-headed girl holds his bigness, and keeps his word.

# BLACK ART IN CINCINNATI.

MR. QUINSEY of Cincinnati was not an Apollo; neither had he ever assumed a name other than his own. He had never conducted a scheme to defraud by use of the mails; nor had he ever robbed a post-office or shot any body; yet his character is so interesting that I cannot, in justice to myself, omit a passing notice.

Quinsey was known as a mesmerist, a ventriloquist, an illusionist, a prestidigitator and a master of the Black Art, and occasionally in "pleasing sorcery that charms the sense" he would entertain audiences at church fairs, picnics and the like for simple fees, while he found much pleasure amusing friends gratuitously at their homes, at his home and sometimes at his place of business.

One evening, at a little entertainment given by himself in neighboring Glendale, after he had knocked the spots off of several decks of cards; after he had taken half a dozen watches that belonged to people in the audience from the janitor's pocket; after he had received communications from departed spirits; after he had removed the head from a beautiful wom-

an and had made the removed head talk; after he had paralyzed four men and a woman on the stage and had allowed the committee to stick pins in them, and after the curtain had dropped, one of the awe-stricken auditors, who had been instrumental in introducing Mr. Quinsey in Glendale, asked the wonderful magician why he did not follow this business in preference to any other?

The professor smiled blandly and appeared silent, but a voice that seemed to come from the bakery underneath the hall, was heard to remark in a deep melodious tone: "He has something better."

Quinsey was superintendent of what was known as the night set in the registry division of the Cincinnati post-office, and his hours of labor were from 10:30 P. M. to 7 A. M. In this set were employed six or seven clerks who worked under the superintendant's direction, and who performed practically the same kind of work that he did. It was their duty to properly record all registered matter that arrived in Cincinnati between 4 P. M. and midnight from the various railroad lines centering there, rebill it and pouch it in the through registry pouches to be dispatched in the morning.

There were something like thirty bills to make out, and the same number of pouches to properly close and send out. When the mails were running heavy the clerks never had a minute to spare, but when they were light, as they frequently were one or two nights each week, there was some opportunity for sociability and innocent amusement.

On these occasions Quinsey would sometimes tell the boys how easy it was for people to be mistaken; how much quicker was the hand than the eye; how it was that frequently things were not what they appeared; how easy it was to deceive the keenest intellect by doing something different than your actions would indicate, and how figures and objects are materialized and made to do their master's bidding.

Sometimes he would illuminate his ideas by a few practical illustrations, and after the young men had seen him shake any number of big silver dollars, a wheelbarrow full of handkerchiefs, and a lot of lanterns from a common gesture, and, in transfixed amazement, had beheld ordinary registered letters vanish before their eyes, without being able to tell where they went, they longed for the nights to come when the work was light. Quinsey was immense!

About this time, while in Chicago, Kidder came to me for conference with an armful of documentary evidence of skillful depredations. Here were the envelopes in which registered letters had from time to time been mailed at offices in Southern Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky, and West Virginia, addressed to offices in all portions of the great Northwest, and which had been rifled of large portions of their contents. Everyone of the letters had passed through the Chicago post-office, where they had been handled during the night time. At first glance one would say it surely indicated trouble in Chicago.

But why, if the thief was in Chicago, did he confine himself to operations on the letters from this particular section, when he could probably have access to

those from any other as well. A few minutes later when we discovered that everyone of the letters referred to had also passed through the Cincinnati office, and in every instance had been dispatched from that office in the morning in through pouches to Chicago, Kidder adjusted his eye-glasses, and offered as a reward, for the capture of the villain, a claim near that beautiful minature salt-water sea, known as Devil's Lake in Dakota.

On the following morning when I tapped Herrick on the shoulder in Cincinnati, and asked who wrote the Chicago registry bills at night that were dispatched in the morning, he answered, "Quinsey," and seemed so amused at my question that he asked why I wanted to know.

"For the reason that I think whoever is doing it is too inquisitive."

"Well, if its Quinsey, I am afraid we'll have our hands full to catch him, for he's just a little bit the slickest man in America. He does all the seemingly impossible things ever heard of, and he does them right before your eyes, too. Quinsey is absolutely marvelous. Why, one night I was in the registry room looking around when, suddenly, I discovered my watch was gone. I had looked to see what time it was when I entered. Well, a little later somebody found it in the Boston pouch, with a tag on it marked: 'Covington.'"

"Yes," said Salmon, who was listening, "and I understand he charms birds, too; while somebody told me a few days ago that at cards he was so expert that nobody would sit in with him; that when it came

his deal he could hold anything he wanted; that the high cards, figuratively speaking, would come to him in carriages; and remain till after the show-down."

The next day I went to Lexington, Ky., and while there I wrote a letter to Mr. Abram Hayden, of Aberdeen, Dakota, on one of the letter-head sheets of Mills, Jackson & Johnson, which read as follows:

"Dear friend Abe:

Jim Turner was in from East Hickman half an hour ago and left the enclosed $200 for me to send to you, and he said you would know how to use it. He has just sold a car-load of mules to Springer, of Cincinnati, but he said he believed there was more profit in loaning money at 20 per cent. in Dakota, than there was in raising mules in Kentucky at present prices.

Say, Abe, when are you coming back after Mary? I heard Min. Stevens and some of the girls in her set say it was considered a sure thing. Hope it is; for of all the real fine blue-grass girls around these parts I think Mary is the——well never mind, old boy, if I wasn't married I'd try and prevent her going to Dakota. You better hurry up.

Jim just stuck his head in the door and told me to tell you if you couldn't get a gilt edge loan at 20, not to let it go less than 18. Jim is a cuss.

I suppose your brother wrote you what happened up at Gil. Harper's recently.

If the cyclones haven't got you by the time this reaches Aberdeen, write.

Very truly, your friend,

FRANK N. MILLS."

This letter I registered at Lexington and at night, about 11 o'clock, when I had followed it into the Cincinnati post-office, Herrick and Salmon were in the money-order division on a step-ladder, peering through a glass transom into the registry division. As soon as possible I joined them, and patiently we waited for Quinsey to turn a trick.

It was exactly two A. M, when he commenced on the Chicago bill. He reached the letter from Lexington at precisely 2:45. It was fat and tempting. Herrick was on the top of the ladder at that instant, and he sent a peculiar thrill of surprise through me when he turned and whispered:

"Hush, hush, he has picked it up.

"Now he's feeling of it.

"He's looking at the back of the R. P. E. (the outside envelope) to see how well it's sealed.

"He's laid it down and placed a book over it; somebody is moving around.

"It's quiet now and he's looking at the back again.

"Hush, don't move, he's carefully feeling again.

"It's under the blotter now; somebody at the other table got up to get a drink. There's no one at his table but himself.

"Hush now, he's making a close examination to see how well its sealed.

"Hush now, for God's sake don't move; he's trying to open it with his knife.

"Hush, hush, hush, he'll have it opened in an instant.

"Its open now, and he's looking at the letter envelope very closely.

"There, d—n it, some fellow has moved again and he's shoved it under the blotter.

"Hush, hush, don't stir; he's feeling of the letter again.

"Hush, don't breathe, he's trying to raise the flap of the envelope; it comes up hard; don't move."

"There, there, there, he's got it up.

"Hush, he's got the money out and is reading the letter."

"He's smiling as he reads.

"We must open the door and rush in now."

"Come, be quick and be quiet; you know he's chain lightning."

"The door's unlocked; now, all together, go!"

An instant later there was a flutter, and all was over. The great conjurer had at last performed an illusion that was not optical—an act not mentioned on the bill.

Applause. Curtain. Prison.

# MY NELLIE'S BLUE EYES.

ABOUT a year ago we received a communication from Mr. Horatio Simmons, a farmer residing a few miles out of Spokane Falls, Washington Territory, which revealed a new, novel, and highly interesting method of securing wives and husbands. To the unmarried this story will possess unusual interest, while the married can smile at the follies of others, and at the same time realize what they have missed.

Mr. Simmons wrote, that having become weary of living alone, and real nice girls being very scarce in his section, he decided to advertise for what he wanted in a matrimonial paper published in Chicago, and that several months prior to the date of his letter to us he inserted the following notice:

"Wanted: Lady correspondents with view to matrimony. Must be under 25, with light hair and blue eyes. Correspondents will please send photograph and describe themselves fully in the first letter, as I have no time to waste writing to those who would be unsuitable. Am a bachelor and farmer, and mean business.

HORATIO SIMMONS,
Spokane Falls,
Wash. Ter."

Mr. Simmons informed us that in response to his "ad." he received two hundred and nineteen letters, and that out of that number of pictures and descriptions he selected eighteen ladies, whom he thought would pass muster. He did not intend to marry the entire eighteen, so he decided to write to each of them, who, of course, would write to him again, and it was his idea that from the eighteen second letters he would be able to narrow the available ones down to possibly one or two. He succeeded admirably, and narrowed the list down to one, and that one was Miss Nellie F. Smith, 18 West Third Street, New York.

A very loving correspondence was carried on for a couple of months or so, when they became engaged. Mr. Simmons' letters were kind, but always had a business sound. Miss Nellie's were very tender, and a thousand times she told her Horatio that she longed so much to be with him. She was tired of the bustle of the city, and she knew her bright anticipations of the country would be fully realized, especially if he was always with her.

His picture was ever before her. In her walks, in her rides she was constantly thinking of him and the happiness that was in store for them. She had learned to milk and churn, while on a short visit to her aunt's near Utica, and she knew she would be of great service on the farm. She dearly loved to work, although she had never been obliged to do much. "Darling Horatio, when are you coming?"

It was then the busy season and Mr. Simmons had so many interests to look after that he did not see how he could spend time to go to New York, so he

arranged with his blue-eyed lassie to come on to Spokane alone, where he would meet her at the train, when they would be married; and to enable the lady to carry out this arrangement he sent her a draft for $125.

Miss Smith acknowledged the receipt of the draft with one of her sweetest efforts, and added that she thought she should get away by the following Monday, but would write again on Saturday and let him know just what train she would leave on, so that he would know when to meet her. She wrote on Saturday that she would leave on Tuesday morning at nine *via* the Erie.

Naturally Mr. Simmons was watching the trains with a great deal of interest three days after he received the last letter, but instead of embracing his Nellie as he expected, no one came that resembled her. He looked for a letter and received this, which had been mailed on an Erie postal car, but which was dated at Binghamton:

"This is to certify that a beautiful young lady, who had been taken suddenly ill on the train, and who was brought to my office in a very low condition, cannot, in my opinion, recover. In her conscious moments she whispers lovingly of you, and she has asked me to notify you of her pitiful condition. She will likely die to-night, when her remains will be turned over to her relatives, whom I have notified by wire.

(Signed.)

FRANKLIN SCRIBNER, M. D.

This was a crushing blow for a man to receive on what he had anticipated would be the happiest day of his life, and it is doubtful what would have become of the disconsolate man had he not sought the postmaster at Spokane, into whose ears Horatio poured his tales of woe and lamentation.

The postmaster was a shrewd fellow, and when he called Mr. Simmons' attention to the wonderful similarity existing between the capital letters in Dr. Scribner's signature, and those made by Nellie when she had written "Spokane Falls," you could have purchased all of Simmons' interest in Washington Territory for much less than the amount he sent to New York.

Who was Miss Nellie F. Smith? No. 18 West Third Street, New York, was occupied by a small cigar store and news stand. The two carriers on the route informed me that they always had from six to twenty letters a day for Miss Smith, who, of course, they never saw. But on one occasion when one of the carriers had called with the mail he observed a colored man, to whom the proprietor handed the letters for Miss Smith. The colored man was likely the messenger who carried the mail to the one who was playing the part of the fair correspondent.

All that it would be necessary to do to locate the mysterious person would be to put a watch on the place, and when the colored man called and went away with the letters follow him and see where he went. Very simple. So it would seem, but the young man who shadowed him away three times, and lost him each time within three blocks, will tell you

that the darkey was the "cunningest coon" he ever tackled.

About the time we were watching West Third Street we received another communication, somewhat similar to the one from Simmons, from Lester Richardson, a young widower residing at or near Phœnix, Arizona. Mr. Richardson had also advertised in the Chicago papers for a blue-eyed, light-haired wife, who would be kind to his little daughter, and who was fond of children. Among those who had answered his advertisement, he said, was Miss Nellie F. Smith, a milliner, who resided near the Pavonia postal station in Jersey City, to which station he had always addressed her. He had sent her $150 to aid her in procuring her wedding outfit, since which time he had received no word from her. It was now conclusive that Miss Smith meant business also.

At the Pavonia station we learned that a colored man called sometimes for the letters and sometimes a colored woman called, and that about thirty ordinary letters and half a dozen registers came addressed to Miss Smith each week. There were then in the office, eleven ordinary and three registers for her, waiting to be called for. We decided to make short work of the scheme, and, with that end in view, I camped down in Pavonia to wait for something to turn up.

No one came that day, although several epistles from an enchanting distance were added to the accumulations. On the following morning bright and early, I was again at the Pavonia post-office, watching and waiting for the soft shadow of a dark cloud.

About four o'clock in the afternoon patience was rewarded by the appearance of a sable gentleman, who was as affable as a bunko engineer.

After he had secured all the mail for Miss Nellie, as he called her, I appeared and informed him that I had a little business to transact with Miss Smith, and I would like her address, or if it pleased him better, I would go with him and call on her.

He could not give me her address and neither could he allow me to go with him to call on her without her consent. The lady did not desire any new acquaintances, and she received calls only from her old friends. Very reserved!

I informed him that the lady had been conducting an unlawful business, which, in its conception, was deeper than the mud in Bradford, and that if he refused to show her up we would certainly arrest him and lock him up for aiding Miss Smith in defrauding her susceptible countrymen.

He would sooner suffer the pangs of endless torture than reveal the whereabouts of the crafty creature, so, without further ceremony, we called a horse car and directed the conductor to let us out at the county jail. On our way over to this well-known establishment Dosser noticed the defiant and dramatic gentleman slyly take something from his pocket and quietly slip it under the car seat.

After we had taken from him all of the letters addressed to Miss Smith, and after we had put him away in a nice warm cell, we glanced at the mysterious article which he had placed under the seat, and which he supposed was still there, and found that it

was the fat bank book of Alexander Brown, who had an account at the Lincoln National, New York.

It was then too late to ascertain anything from the bank that day, but on the following morning we learned upon inquiry that Alexander Brown resided at Mountain View, N. J., which was a small station on the D. L. & W. about five miles from Paterson. I lost no time in getting to Mountain View, where I learned from the postmaster that Alexander Brown was unquestionably the gentleman then in jail in Jersey City, and that his wife, who was also quite accomplished, had gone to New York two hours before to ascertain why her husband did not return home the night before.

I wired Dosser that Mr. and Mrs. Brown were surely the people we wanted, and that Mrs. Brown was then in New York or Jersey City, and most likely would return to Mountain View on the Lackawanna train leaving Pavonia either at 4:30 or 5:15 that afternoon, and that I thought he and Hartshorn should go to the station and arrest her when she came to take the train.

Accordingly they secured the postmaster to identify her and stationed themselves in the ladies' waiting-room to await her coming. She did not come to the 4.15, but about five o'clock she opened the door and entered with a triumphant air. "That's her," said the postmaster, whom Mrs. Brown had not seen.

The room was filled with ladies waiting to take the train, when Dosser blushingly approached the dusky enchantress, and in a very gentlemanly manner, touched his hat and modestly asked:

"I beg pardon, but is this Mrs. Alexander Brown of Mountain View?"

Turning upon him with the scorn of a demon she replied in a manner that attracted the attention of all the ladies present; "No, this not Mrs. Alexander Brown of Mountain View, and I would like to know, sir, why you assume to insult me so grossly?"

The ladies waiting were astonished at the scene, and when Hartshorn, who stood beside Dosser, asked "Are you not Miss Nellie F. Smith then?" the excitement became intense.

The Ethiopian queen raised her crested head and tuneful voice, and, with snapping eyes, screamed: "I will no longer bear the insults of designing men. I am a respectable lady and demand protection, call the police."

A pandemonium scene ensued, and while Dosser was vainly attempting to assure the waiting, frantic passengers that no harm was intended, and while Hartshorn was closely following Mrs. Brown with soothing words, the depot policeman entered to quell the riot. Just as the policeman was reaching for Hartshorn the little postmaster turned up and said: "touch him not; he is all right and knows what he is about."

By this time the ticket agent had worked his way out into the crowd to take a hand in restoring order, and, quite fortunately, he recognized the postmaster who explained the matter and a minute later peace reigned and the dashing Mrs. Brown was on her way to jail.

While at Mountain View, on the pretense that I

was an Insurance Agent, around examining risks, I obtained an entrance to the home of the Browns to ascertain if there was anything lying around that might result in spontaneous combustion. If you could have seen the hundreds of photographs of both young and old men, and the thousand love letters addressed to Miss Nellie F. Smith that I discovered in the large front room upstairs, you would have done, as I did,—seated yourself among the inflammable evidences of folly and wondered at the weakness of mankind.

That evening after I had returned to New York with the quantity of interesting spontaneous matter that I had gathered at Mountain View, and had noted with pleasure the forty ordinary letters, the five registers and the four express money packages addressed to Miss Nellie F. Smith, 18 West Third Street, New York, which Dosser and Hartshorn had found in Mrs. Brown's small traveling bag when it was searched at the police station, it looked to us very much as if Babylon had fallen.

After Mrs. Brown had remained in jail a few weeks she stated that her husband was the originator of the magical scheme, and that he had carried it on almost without her aid from the beginning. He corroborated the statement, whereupon the District Attorney entered a *nolle prosequi* in Mrs. Brown's case, while Alexander slipped into the penitentiary at Trenton as easily as if he had slid in on a toboggan slide covered with castor oil.

# REMOVED BY DEATH.

## AN UPRIGHT MAN.

---

My good friend Richard Blackstone had lived long beyond his alloted time and had been postmaster at the little town of Springdale for upwards of fifty years. Here he first saw the light of this beautiful world, and here he grew from innocent childhood to noble manhood; here, too, from his meridian to the mellow sunset of life, he had spent his uneventful years in happiness and contentment.

He had watched the coming and the going of many in his time, and had mingled in the joys and sorrows of several generations. His little office was the welcome resting-place of the rich, the poor, the strong, the weak, the young, the old. Some came for counsel, some for advice, and a good, kind, impartial father was he to every one for many miles around.

He was the first person the children became acquainted with, and of all the people in and around Springdale, there were scarcely any who could notice

that he had changed much since they were children; and, so long had he been the faithful servant of the people, no one seemed to realize that some day, some time, he, too, would be called upon to go.

It had been my custom, since I had become acquainted with him, to call whenever I was passing and spend an hour listening to the good things he would say. I always gathered from him little chunks of practical wisdom that served to make my own life brighter, and I never bade him good-bye when I felt that I had remained too long.

A visit to the comfortable and cheerful home of this venerable old gentleman was one of the pleasures I anticipated with much interest and enjoyed more than all others. I always felt when with him that I was in the presence of goodness and godliness. In the presence of a man to whom an impure thought was a stranger, and whose sublime Christian virtues, like precious stones, shone bright when contrasted with others less radiant.

One lovely day last autumn I called again to visit my dear old companion, and, as I left the train, I listened sadly to the mournful music of the village bells. Yonder, slowly wending its way along the shaded streets, was a long train of mourners, bowed in grief; and the former signs of activity about the place were hushed in peaceful silence.

As I passed a pleasant home I asked a tiny child at the gate the cause of this solemn occasion, and she said: "Why, don't you know? Uncle Dick has gone to heaven to 'tend the letters."

Overcome with grief I joined the weeping relatives, friends, and neighbors, and followed the old man to his grave; and there, among the melancholy scenes, I spent the saddest day of all my life.

END.

"A STRONG MIND IN A SOUND BODY."

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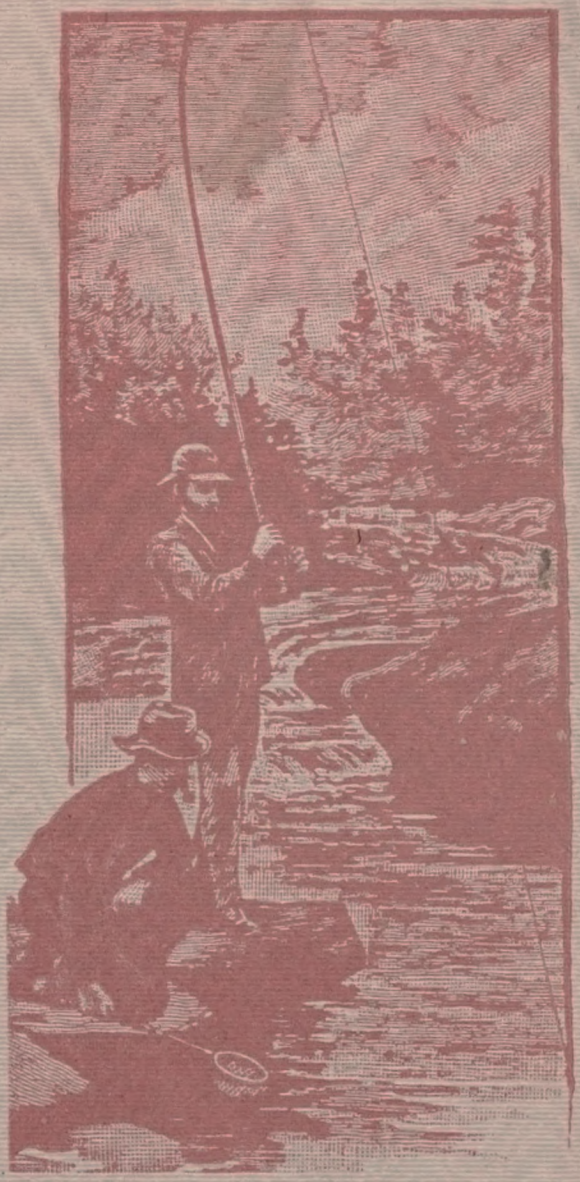

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